

Two Men

By the one man's offence many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offence resulted* in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offences *resulted* in justification. For if by the one man's offence death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offence *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Rm 5:15-19

Two types of men

The doctrine of salvation is pictured by Paul as a matter of federal headship. This simply means that mankind is divided into two camps under two covenant heads, Adam and Christ. Thus all men are separated into two types, those in the flesh like their father Adam and those in the Spirit in union with their head, Christ. Thus Christ is spoken of as being both a second man and the final Adam (not a second Adam).

And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. ... The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord from heaven. 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*. 1 Cor 15:45, 48-49

Jesus is the Second Man because he is the firstborn of a new race of people – Christians in union with God. These are not of the flesh, not of Adam but are born of the Spirit and are new creatures in Christ. Jesus is the final Adam, the last Adam, because he has taken Adamic nature and brought it into death on the cross. The Adamic race is terminated in Christ so that at the end there will be only the heavenly man; the Adamic sinful race will be removed to hell.

So the work of Christ on the cross does two things regarding human nature; it takes on all that is in Adam and consigns it to death. The flesh and sin are condemned to death at the cross. But the resurrection of Christ ensures that all those in him are given a new type of human nature by the Spirit, resulting in a new race of heavenly people. After the Last Day only the new race of the Second Man will be alive on earth and the race of people in Adam who were not saved will be in hell.

Thus the mission of Jesus was not to bring peace on earth, and not to unite all people, but rather to bring division:

Do *you* suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. Lk 12:51

Jesus' ministry results in division; that is, it leads to a separation in mankind between those who are in Adam and remain in sin and those who are in Christ and are justified. He separates mankind into two men. At the end of time, at the Last Day, the Lord himself will divide resurrected men into the sheep and the goats; the sheep into Christ's inheritance and the goats into condemnation.

[Aside: this divisive ministry of Jesus, rather than bringing peace, destroys all millennialist doctrine. There is no utopian future for earth, no millennium peace, no global revival that brings peace on earth, no ruling of the world through apostles and prophets. The Gospel brings division into two men antagonistic to each other.]

The two natures of the Christian

Now believers on earth at this present time are in two worlds. Until the final act of sanctification when the Spirit removes the old nature at the return of Christ, they have an old nature and a new nature.

The old nature is the nature that was born in Adam which sins. It is not removed by conversion and neither is it ever improved; it is fit only for destruction. The process of sanctification is not improving the old man but putting it off in self-denial.

The new nature is the new life given to the believer in regeneration which is in the likeness of God. It is the life of Christ in us maintained by the Holy Spirit.

These two natures represent life in Adam and life in Christ. Sanctification is the choosing to live in the new nature instead of the old nature. Sanctification is putting off the old man and putting on the new man.

Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Eph 4:22-24

This is the same as the self-denial demanded by Jesus that his disciples take up their cross and follow him. In other words, die to the old life (take up cross) and walk in the new man.

Now we have spoken about this many times and need not develop it further here. What I want to draw your attention to is the way that God develops this theme throughout the Old Testament.

Two men in the Old Testament history

In essence, the story of the Old Testament is the account of these two men in history. Over and over we see that there is a division in mankind, even within the chosen people of Israel, and that division leads to antagonism between two men.

Cain and Abel

Thus right at the start we see that the first sons of Adam and Eve represent these two men. Cain is the old nature and Abel is the new nature. Abel pleases God and Cain dishonours God. He knew that God required a bloody sacrifice¹ but instead brings the fruit of the work of his hands. Abel's sacrifice represents reliance upon God's order in compliance with his word (through Adam); Cain represents human strength striving for redemption. The failure of his sacrifice shows Cain's true colours and the first murder is committed. The old man sought to kill the new man.

Thus even within the first family one son was of Christ another son was of the flesh and full of sin. Immediately we see division, even between brothers.

¹ When God provided Adam and Eve with animal skins we can presume that God gave Adam instructions about the need for a bloody sacrifice since this feature immediately became prominent in mankind. Everybody recognised the need for blood offerings and Abel's sacrifice must have resulted from information given to Adam.

Jacob and Esau

The division is evidenced in two later brothers. God's principles of election are especially drawn out in the sons of Isaac. Contrary to patriarchal precedent, God had chosen Jacob to be the inheritor of Isaac's blessing and inheritance. However, instead of waiting for God to work this out, the scheming of Jacob and his mother led to Esau being cheated out of these rights of the firstborn son. As a result Jacob has to learn divine principles through years of discipline (although God still blessed him in these years of difficulty and hard work).

This led to enmity between Jacob and Esau for many years, with Jacob fearing for his life and having to live in exile. Eventually, in the providence of God, Jacob is brought to learn dependence upon God and self-denial, and then his name is changed to 'Prince with God' and only then is he able to bring blessing to others. So powerful is his spiritual ministry that he is able to bless kings and prophesy about the future of his family. However, the progeny of Esau become the enemies of Israel.

Thus Esau and Jacob again demonstrate the separation between two types of men. Like those in Christ, Jacob is loved by God from before his birth; but like the old nature, Esau was hated by God.²

David and Saul

One final picture should be enough and this reveals the division in Israel's first two kings.

David's victory over Goliath shows the triumph of the new man over the world and the enemies of God. Goliath was an 'uncircumcised Philistine' outside of God's calling and the oppressor of the Lord's people. However, David also had to triumph over Saul. Overcoming the world (Goliath) needs rugged resistance and warfare, but overcoming the old nature (Saul) requires self-denial, loss and patience.

Saul represents the old nature. Saul is not a Canaanite and an enemy of Israel; he is of Israel but not a man of faith, not after God's own heart and not of the remnant. He was categorically rejected by God.³ His death by self-murder was the capstone of a rebellious life.

Thus the old nature had to war against the new nature and this is represented in Saul raging against David because he was anointed by God. David had to suffer years of being oppressed and persecuted by Saul; the imagery is well suited to our walk.

So we see a continual symbolic representation of the struggle between the new and old nature in the characters of Israel's history. This antagonism is repeated in the teaching of the Old Testament where we see that the new man is blessed by God and the old nature is cursed.

² Mal 1:2-3; Rm 9:13.

³ 1 Sam 15:23, 26. Saul had many sins but his chief sin was in rejecting the word of the Lord. The old nature never submits to God's word but strives to use its own strength to accomplish godly things.

Two men in the Old Testament teaching

Perhaps we see this most clearly in the Psalms and Proverbs. Over and over again there is a clear dichotomy demonstrated between the righteous man and the wicked man. The righteous man is the elect person in Christ, or the new nature, while the wicked man is the reprobate and the old nature. Thus we see this parallelism:

Christ	Adam
Righteous	Wicked
New man	Old man
Elect	Reprobate
Loved by God	Hated by God
Blessed	Cursed
Godly	Ungodly
Wise	Fool

By understanding this dichotomy we will better understand the teaching of the Old Testament.

Instead of spending page after page expounding instances of this, we will rather simply look at Psalm 1, which is a précis of the thinking in all the psalms. It demonstrates the differences between two types of men.

1 Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

4 The ungodly *are* not so, but *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

General observations

The psalm is clearly divided into two halves; verses 1-3 regard the righteous man while verses 4-6 speak of the wicked. Both are spoken figuratively as plants but only one bears fruit, the other withers to nothing. One is driven by studying God's word the other ignores it. One has life, the other perishes; one is blessed the other is not.

Verse 1

Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

This verse addresses the new nature, the godly man, the righteous man.

The first thing that we are told is that this man is blessed. In fact this man is very blessed since the Hebrew emphasis of the plural form is used. Since the word 'man' is singular, we can also assume that the blessings are many and varied, requiring the plural form.

However tried and afflicted, every servant of God has vast treasures of good things in possession and in prospect. Both the Psalmist and the Saviour began their teachings with pronouncing blessedness to be the portion of God's people.⁴

Paul does the same in his most heavenly letter, that of Ephesians, when he has to use unusual Greek superlatives at the beginning of the letter to describe the greatness of Christ and the richness of his grace and inheritance in the saints. The saints are blessed in Christ from eternity and this blessedness includes grace being lavished⁵ upon them.

There is only blessing for the new man and none for the old. God does not favour the unrighteous. Any doctrine which claims that God favours the wicked is a lie (such as Common Grace or Arminianism). Indeed the Bible tells us that the wicked are hated by God and cursed (Ps 5:6, 11:5). Nothing they do is acceptable to God; not their daily work (Prov 21:4), not their sacrifices (Prov 15:8) nor even their praying, which is not heard by God (Prov 15:29, 28:9; 1 Pt 3:12). Even the house of the wicked is cursed (Prov 3:33).

The life and character of this man follows a certain course; this is represented by his walking, his standing and his sitting; in other words his the general direction of his life, his reputation in public and his relaxation in private. The theme of Ephesians is also gathered around the sitting, walking and standing of the believer where this represents his being rested in God first, the direction of his life as a testimony and his battle with the enemy.

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly

This man takes his direction from God's word and does not listen to the prevailing philosophy of the world. The counsel of the ungodly involves more than mere worldly counsel, it means all worldly goals, aspirations, methods, principles, actions and practices.

For instance, the most common piece of modern worldly counsel, heard in the media, armchair counsellors and acted dramas every day, is that you must follow your heart for personal satisfaction. The number of times people (particularly women) have committed adultery on this advice is evidence of its wickedness. But sadly there are many Christians who chirrup this awful counsel.

The reason why this is wicked is that the heart is deceitful above all things and corrupt.⁶ Unless you have a pure heart it will lead you into sin and not righteousness. The heart of the wicked will only lead you into sin and the counsel of the wicked is to be rejected. This also includes the counsel of the most respected wicked people, such as philosophers and religious leaders. Listening to Confucius will not help you please God in your daily walk.

Thus says the LORD: 'Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD.' Jer 17:5

The counsel of the world always leads to sin; it does not achieve God's will and thus the godly man avoids living this way, because he fears sin.

Nor stands in the path of sinners

The righteous man does not travel down the same road as sinners. It is sometimes very difficult to avoid going down the same routes that the world does since we are surrounded

⁴ WS Plumer, *Psalms*, Banner of Truth, 1978, p27.

⁵ As per RSV; 'Made to abound' NKJV.

⁶ Jer 17:9, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?'

by its influences every day; but these must be resisted and the believer must be directed by God's word, not man's.

This also applies to churches. Most modern churches are based upon principles that have been derived from the world and not from Scripture; thus they fail this basic test of Psalm 1. When a church erects a big dedicated building, at great cost, in order to attract large numbers of people – it has followed worldly principles and not Scripture. When it develops a hierarchical leadership structure, with many and various offices and positions, it has followed the world and not Scripture. When a church dumbs-down meetings, never mentions sin in Gospel presentations and makes the meeting as attractive as possible to the world, it has followed sinful practices instead of Biblical ones. Such churches are standing in the path of sinners.

This phrase also means that we must be very careful about our alliances and friends. We must do good to our neighbours and if we had no friends in the world we would never evangelise anyone. However, we must be careful not to stand in the way of sinners; we must not form so close an alliance with sinners that we are labelled with them and walk in their ways.

For example, helping your homosexual next-door neighbour because he is poor and starving is a good work; that is being a good friend even though he does not deserve it. However, going to a gay nightclub with that neighbour would be walking in the way of sinners and would be very wrong.

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful

'Scornful' means to be inflated, mocking, derisive, arrogant. This is the opposite of the humility that characterises the new man. The righteous man does not rest in the company of those who are scornful and unrighteous. But 'scornful' in Scripture also refers to the attitude of the wicked towards God and their hatred of divine things. Richard Dawkins is scornful. The sinful witnesses of Jesus on the cross were scornful.

Now this has many practical applications. It is a test, for instance, of what we watch on television to gain some relaxation. Do we put up with programmes that are derisive of God or that mock righteousness? Any programme which lifts up unrighteousness, in any form, is scornful of God and dangerous to us. Even seemingly harmless documentaries about nature can be scornful when they constantly deny creationism and focus upon evolutionary theory. 'Nice' person David Attenborough presents truly awful programmes from the Christian perspective since he is an ardent anti-creationist, determined to crusade for evolution. Such programmes are dangerous for immature believers (especially children) since they are the seat of the scornful.

Verse 2

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

The new man delights in the word of God. The law was the word of God given at that time, which was later expanded with the writings and the prophets, (which includes the poetic and history books) and which was later comprehended in the New Testament.⁷ In the psalmist's eyes the law was then the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses. The point is that the psalmist looked to God's revealed word in Scripture to form his ethics. This required

⁷ The NT, comprising the last words of Christ through his own ministry and his word through the apostles, is the revelation of the New Covenant and thus is the filter for interpreting all the Old Testament. '*The new is in the old concealed and the old is in the new revealed*' (sic. Augustine and Justin Martyr).

diligent study, day and night. Notice that he does not just delight; he also studies. Delight is insufficient; it must be followed up with earnest and diligent study.

Meditation is the practice of reflection; chewing over and over the word of God in your mind, giving deep consideration to what you have read. It is the meditation of the word that cements truth in the consciousness.

Without meditation grace never thrives, prayer is languid, praise dull, and religious duties unprofitable.⁸

The word of God is not just to be read, but studied and reflected upon day and night. It should be the constant joy of a believer who is saved by divine grace. Having been brought into the family of God, a believer ought to desire to hear the words of his Father. There is something terribly wrong with Christians who rarely read the Bible and have no desire to do so.

This verse is the first time that the word Yahweh ('Jehovah')⁹ is mentioned in the Psalms. This is the most important divine name and the one that is both associated with the independent, self-existent, being of God and also his covenant grace. Note that the first mention of Yahweh is in association with his word. The revelation of God is always in connection with his word.

Jesus himself told us that we cannot alter or omit any of God's word without condemnation.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matt 5:19

If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book. Rev 22:19

Sinners and the old nature hate the word of God. It is the wicked who seek to diminish the authority and veracity of God's word.

If the new man delights in God's word, then those supposed believers who deny God's word, or completely ignore God's word, are either impostors or are living in their old nature. Either way they cannot have any authority to lead God's people. This obviates a great many modern church leaders. Christianity without Scripture is a false religion and not true Christianity.

What is your delight in?

Verse 3

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

The righteous always bears fruit. There is no good fruit produced by the wicked, or by the old nature.

⁸ WS Plumer, *Psalms*, Banner of Truth, 1978, p28.

⁹ Jehovah, though popular for sentimental reasons is a made up name (actually made up by a Jesuit who was a chaplain to a medieval pope) and is completely incorrect. There is no such name in the Hebrew OT. The correct form is Yahweh, or possibly, Yahveh.

The figure is of a tree near water that always has the resources to bear fruit and thus to prosper. It does not have to be a big tree; the issue is bearing fruit not the size of the tree. The small tree that bears the fruit it should is as important to God as the big tree that produces much fruit. Each of us is called to prosper in his own field and everybody is different. It is folly to try to be like someone else; simply bear your own fruit.

In England trees sprout up everywhere. Railway cuttings all over the country are filled with sycamore trees, like small woods, that have just grown naturally. However, the countryside for the psalmist was dry, often barren, where trees only grew up near watercourses or irrigation channels. Trees with roots in the river would be green while all the surrounding plants were withered and dried up. This is a picture of the elect who alone receive provision from a hidden source;¹⁰ the rest of the population is without grace.

The righteous man is planted; there is no accident that the tree is near water – it was planted there by a gardener. The wicked are not planted but they wither in the wilderness. By nature we would all wither in the desert but the elect are planted like an olive or palm tree; the planting of the Lord. It is grace that plants us near resources; those not planted by God will die.

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. Ps 92:12-13

The fruit is borne in its season. Different trees bear fruit at different times according to their design. Thus the almond tree blossomed very early and is a symbol of resurrection for that reason. However, we must not try to rush the fruit we bear to compete with others, but must simply bear our own fruit in our own time.

The key to prosperity in this image is being near the rivers. Believers will only bear fruit if they are full of the Spirit and depending upon God for their resources. The old nature has no access to God's Spirit but is under condemnation.

'Neither does their leaf wither', refers to the outward profession or testimony of the believer; when you see a tree from a distance you first notice its leaves. Genuine Christians will always have green leaves, that is, they will always shine with a good testimony. If the outward, professing works of a Christian are dead, then they are not a true believer. Palm trees and olive trees, which Scripture often uses to refer to righteous men, are unusual in that they have leaves and fruit, always retain their foliage and always yield their fruit in the right season. Few trees do all this. Such trees speak of life.

Those planted by the Lord also prosper; perhaps not in the affluent way of the world, but they prosper nevertheless. The Lord himself promised this:

Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time -- houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions -- and in the age to come, eternal life. Mk 10:29-30

There is divine provision 'in this time' as well as rewards in the next world. All genuine believers tend towards prosperity unless God has a plan for them to suffer for a particular purpose. Thus many of the historic martyrs had their lives cut short before they could prosper – but this merits a great heavenly reward to compensate.

¹⁰ Jer 17:8, 'For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit'.

Ordinarily, believers prosper. I have known illiterate and delinquent teenagers come to the Lord and teach themselves to read and gain useful employment as a result of the changed lifestyle of the Gospel. This is prospering. I have known others who were in very poor circumstances who gradually rose to reasonable affluence. This is partly because genuine converts learn to work hard as part of a Christian lifestyle, and prosperity follows hard work and diligence (not faith, as modern Charismatics teach). Others may have modest lifestyles but are blessed with large faithful families. We are not promised riches, but we ought to prosper as God leads. Godliness profits (1 Tim 4:8).

Believers do prosper because God's word says they do. Therefore, we have to understand what prospering is; it is not necessarily materialistic.

Believers can still prosper even while they are being persecuted. From the moment you are regenerated you are prospering because you are growing in grace. Some prosper more than others, but even in materialistic terms many believers find that they prosper over time if they obey God. The course of the believer's life is upward, whatever his struggles. Progressing in sanctification is prospering.

The chief psalm that addresses the wicked prospering and the struggles of the righteous is Ps 73 written by Asaph. But after moaning, he comes to the conclusion that this comparison is foolish (v22). In verse 17 his thinking changes after going into the sanctuary and getting a divine perspective. The prosperity of the wicked isn't real since it vanishes very quickly and they go to hell with nothing but torment. This shows the importance of having a divine perspective on our lot in life. Many struggling, afflicted, sick saints in history lived in poor conditions and yet felt that they were prospering in God.

Verse 4

The ungodly *are* not so, but *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.

The righteous man is a strong tree with watered roots but the wicked have no root at all and thus are blown away by the wind. They have no life and are thus like chaff; dead husks; dried out stalks.

The wicked have no foundation in their lives but are aimless and hopeless. They have no worthy, attainable goals and no means of reaching them anyway. They are driven people, pushed around by the whims of the enemy.

Verse 5

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

The wicked are unable to stand in the Final Judgment. They are unable to hold their head up high and be counted with the righteous. They will be unable to look at God but will be spread-eagled on the floor like a defeated king in the victor's court. They will have no advocate for their sins but will face the wrath of God without relent.

They are grouped together as sinners and are unable to stand with the righteous, who are completely separated from them in the day of wrath.

Verse 6

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The end of the wicked is to perish. The NT makes clear that this is not annihilation but everlasting destruction; a continuing destruction. This destruction is eternal separation from God in torment.

But the way of the righteous is known by God. This is because he leads them in the paths of life. The Lord preserves the righteous and directs their paths. In times of affliction the righteous can be encouraged that God's knows their ways; he is with them in the difficult stages of life, always ready to support and direct. When you are in trouble, God knows exactly where you are and what you need and is always ready to provide. Thus the righteous have God looking over them for good but the wicked have only God's judgment hanging over them.

Conclusion

These few examples show that there is a continuing theme in Scripture centred around two types of men, the righteous elect and the wicked reprobate. The elect are loved by God, blessed, provided for and sustained to eternity; the wicked are hated by God, condemned and meted out with wrath and destruction at the end.

But the examples in Scripture also teach us about the old and new nature; they demonstrate their priorities and consequences. These act as warnings to the modern believer. Thus when we read about Jacob and Esau we need to understand the underlying symbolism to gain the most profit from their biographies. Such study leads to wisdom.

Above all the two men speak of the continuing battle between God's man, Christ, and the man under the control of God's enemy, the flesh. The teaching and examples in Scripture ought to provide an incentive for believers to deny themselves, put off the old nature, put on the new nature and concentrate upon God's word.

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