

How Men Respond



Born Of God (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue with our theme for this week, "Born of God," a theme which deals with the most profound life-changing experience that can ever happen to any human being.

In my introductory talk yesterday, we looked at John's picture of God in His eternal being before time began or creation took place and we saw there the mystery of both unity and plurality in the eternal being of God. This is what John says:

> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men."

The Greek word here translated "Word," as I pointed out yesterday, is logos. And this means much more than the English word "word." I suggested that you could understand it in the following terms: understanding, reason, intelligence or purpose. We could amplify that perhaps and say that the word here is the infinite understanding and purpose of God expressed, not in mere theory or knowledge, but in a Person. I pointed out that personality is higher than that which is not personal. The ultimate revelation of God logically had to be in a person, not just in a book or a theory. And this person is related to God as a Son to a Father, showing forth His perfect likeness, the channel of His creative activity, the source of all life.

And then comes one of the great miracles of history this divine person, the Eternal Word, was manifested in human flesh. John records this in chapter 1, verse 14:

> "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

So there's the historical event, the Word, the Eternal God, manifested in human flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, in my talk today, I'm going to share with you how the people of that time responded to the presence of the Eternal

Word in their midst, which is just how people still respond today. In this respect, nothing has changed in the course of 2,000 years. Listen now to what John says about the response of the people of the time of Jesus. John, chapter 1, verses 10 and 11:

> "He [the Word, Jesus] was in the world, and though the world was made [by] him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own [or to those who were His own], but his own did not receive him."

He was in the world, He created the world, and yet the world (that is, the human society, the human social order of that time not the universe, not created things but the human order of that time) did not recognize Him. He came to His own people, the Jewish people; they did not receive Him. You see, the Jewish people of that time were looking for a political and military figure to deliver them from foreign rule and restore the kingdom of David. That was their concept of the promised Messiah. They saw their material needs, but they did not see their spiritual needs.

People with such expectations could not recognize God in their midst. And yet their own prophets have clearly warned them that this was how it would be. For instance, in Isaiah, chapter 53, the prophet Isaiah says in the first three verses:

> "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? [He warns us against unbelief and he speaks about Jesus as the arm, the strength, the manifestation of the Lord's divine intervention on behalf of His people. And then, prophetically, he gives this picture of Jesus:] He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. [And believe me, Israel in those days was very dry ground spiritually.] He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Every one of those words was accurately fulfilled. First in Jesus Himself and then in the reaction of His own Jewish people to His coming. And then later on, the prophet Zechariah gives a picture of Jesus coming into Jerusalem as the ordained King. In Zechariah, chapter 9, verse 9:

> "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

There's a key word there which is "gentle." Jesus came as the King promised, He rode into Jerusalem exactly as Zechariah had predicted on the colt, the foal of a donkey, but He came gently. He didn't come as a mighty conqueror. He didn't come with a sword in His hand. He came in love, He came in came in mercy. And one of the greatest tragedies of human history is that because He came in this form His own people did not recognize Him, did not receive Him. They had expected something different. They had expected something and someone who would meet their carnal and material needs, their political needs, their military needs. But Jesus had to come first to meet their spiritual needs because until their spiritual needs were met, God was not able in His justice to give them what He had promised them the kingdom of David, the first place among the nations. But they, not seeing their spiritual need, rejected the One whom God sent. And how would you respond if you'd been in their place? Before you criticize them, just ask yourself: Do I realize my spiritual need? Or am I simply concerned with material, political, social issues, not seeing my own spiritual need?

The irony of this situation was that though humanity did not recognize their Creator and their Redeemer, though the Jewish people themselves, for the most part, did not recognize Him, the whole of the created universe recognized and knew and saw in Jesus the Mighty God, the Creator. I want to illustrate this by four examples from His life on earth. First of all, when He's crossing the Sea of Galilee with His disciples--it's recorded in Matthew, chapter 8, verses 23-27:

> "Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. [That's His humanity.] The disciples went and woke him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We're going to drown!' He replied, 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?' Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, 'What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!'"

What an irony! The tempestuous sea and the raging winds recognized their Creator. He spoke just one brief sentence to them, they obeyed Him instantly. No wonder His disciples marveled. They themselves had not yet fully realized who it was that was in their midst. But the waves and the winds recognized Him immediately.

And then there's the story of the fig tree in Matthew 21, verses 18 and 19:

> "Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, 'May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.'"

The tree recognized the authority of the Word spoken by the Creator and instantly it did what was appropriate to the situation. The tree withered under His judgment. You see, the tree recognized not only the Creator but also the Judge.

And then there's the story of the ass' colt, which we've already glanced at in the prophecy from Zechariah, chapter 9. Now we'll look at the New Testament fulfillment.

> "As they approached Jerusalem [It's Mark 11, verses 1 and 2.] As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.'"

Now anybody who's familiar with animals will know that a colt, whether it's a colt of a donkey or a horse that's never been ridden on, once anybody first gets on its back will begin to buck and rear and protest and it has to be broken in by a process that takes both time and skill. But listen what happened when Jesus approached this colt:

When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.

... And rode into Jerusalem on it. You see, that colt recognized the Creator. It responded differently to Him from the way it would have responded to any other human being.

And finally, even the sun recognized the Creator. We look now at the picture of the crucifixion of Jesus in Luke 23, verses 44-46, as this tragedy approached its climax. This is what Luke says:

> "It was not about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last."

Even the sun could not bear to watch the dying agony of the Eternal Son of God. And yet most of the human spectators saw only a man dying a criminal's death in agony and shame. There are always two ways to look at the life of Jesus. One is to see only the natural. The other is to see the divine and the eternal behind the veil of the natural.

Now, before you start to criticize the people of Jesus' time, the Jewish people and others, just ask yourself this question: Is it possible that God has somehow come into my life and I have not recognized it? Am I so concerned with my physical and material needs that when God comes to meet my spiritual needs I just don't recognize it?

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be presenting the opposite side of the coin what happens when men do recognize God in their midst.

Radio Program

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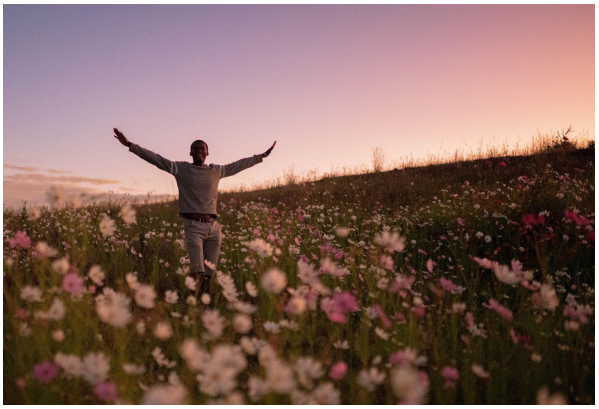

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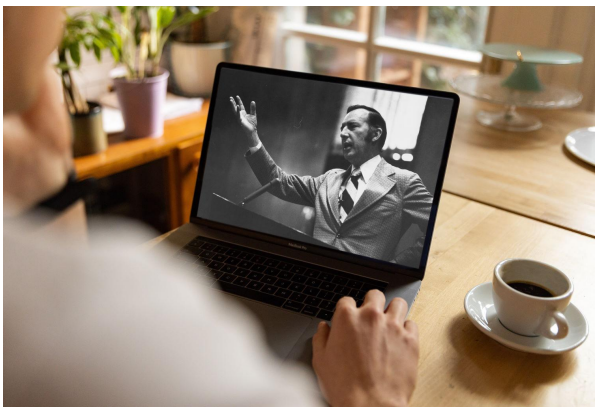

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