

## CHAPTER 3

### WHO SEES ME IN THIS WORLD? (What is My Place in the World?)

In the last chapter we thought about all of the billions of people in this world. These people have different *climates* and they have different *cultures*, but the Lord Jesus Christ died for them all.

There are people all around me. I probably see hundreds or even thousands of people every week. I am in the middle of all of these people. Where do **I** fit into this world with all its multitudes of people? How do **I** fit in? Who knows that I am even here? Does anyone notice me? Does anyone spot me?

#### Does Anyone See Me in this World?

You are not lost in the middle of the crowd. People do spot you and people do see you:



One person in a large crowd may seem insignificant, but that one person has an important place. Think of a large puzzle with hundreds of pieces. Will people notice just one piece? Every piece of the puzzle is important and has a place. When the puzzle is put together and just one piece is missing, will the missing piece be noticed?

There are always people in the crowd who will see you and who will know that you are there. As they look at you, what do they see? Are you just like them? Are you different from them?

How are you like them and how might you be different from them?

### Alike on the Outside

As you think about the people all around you, how are all people usually alike? Do most people have two hands? two eyes? one nose? Do all people have a head? a heart? at least one lung? Do all men have the same kind of flesh (1 Cor. 15:39)? \_\_\_\_\_ Have all men come from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7; Psalm 103:14)? \_\_\_\_\_ Do all men enjoy God's promise of protection (Genesis 11:5,9-11)? \_\_\_\_\_ Can you think of other ways that people are alike on the outside?

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### Alike on the Inside

How are people alike on the inside? How can a person become different on the inside?

Who was the first man that God created (Genesis 2:20)? \_\_\_\_\_ Did Cain come from this man (Genesis 4:1)? \_\_\_\_\_ Did Noah come from this man? \_\_\_\_\_ Did your parents come from this man? \_\_\_\_\_ Did you come from this man? \_\_\_\_\_ Did we all come from Adam? \_\_\_\_\_ Is Adam the father of us all? \_\_\_\_\_

When you were born you received certain traits and characteristics from your parents (the color of your skin, the color of your hair, the color of your eyes, etc.). There are certain things that are passed down from parent to child. There is something that Adam has passed down to every person who has ever been born. Adam sinned against God (Genesis chapter 3) and he became a sinner. Every person born into the world (except the Lord Jesus Christ – Luke 1:35) has received a **sinful nature** from Adam. This **sinful old nature** is described in Ephesians 4:22. The **old man** is sinful and corrupt and wicked. There is nothing good found in us (see Romans 3:10-12).

See 1 John 1:8,10. Do you have an **Adam nature** (a sinful nature)? \_\_\_\_\_ Do your friends each have an **Adam nature**? \_\_\_\_\_ Do your parents? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the same thing true for the people living in China and India? \_\_\_\_\_ All people are alike because they have all received the same nature from Adam.

### The African and the Leopard





Consider Jeremiah 13:23. Think carefully about each question that is asked in this verse. Can an Ethiopian (an African, a dark-skinned person) change his skin? Sometimes people try to change the color of their hair, but have you ever known anyone who has tried to change the color of his own skin? \_\_\_\_\_ Can the leopard change his spots (Jeremiah 13:23)? \_\_\_\_\_ Can the leopard change his spots into stripes so that he will look like a tiger? \_\_\_\_\_ No, spots are something that are passed down from the leopard parents to the leopard children. It is part of the nature and makeup of a leopard to have spots. It is part of the nature and makeup of an Ethiopian to have dark skin.

Notice the last part of Jeremiah 13:23. The verse is talking about a person who is accustomed to doing evil. This person is in the habit of doing evil. He does evil every day. This describes every one of us! We all have an **Adam nature** (which is sinful, evil and corrupt) and therefore we all are accustomed to doing evil. Did anyone have to teach you to do wrong or did this come quite naturally? The question that our verse is asking is this :

***Can a person who is accustomed to doing evil do good?***

The answer is "no!"

It is impossible for an Ethiopian to change his skin (color).

It is impossible for a leopard to change his spots.

It is impossible for an evildoer to do good.

A person cannot act against his nature. If a person has an **Adam nature**, then he will act as a child of Adam. Think of a sheep and a wolf. A sheep has a **sheep nature** (gentle) and a wolf has a **wolf nature** (ferocious, violent). The wolf cannot become a lamb and the lamb cannot become a wolf. Even if the wolf decides to put on sheep's clothing, on the inside it will still be violent and will want to go out and slay and eat meat (compare Matthew 7:15). Can the wolf change its violent nature? Not unless God does a miracle (see Isaiah 11:6).

### **The Clay is Always Clay**

Suppose you were to take a piece of clay and work it with your hands. You could take this clay and shape it into anything you wanted. You could shape it into a club or a ball or a mouse or a lion. But no matter what shape it is, it is always clay.

People are all shaped out of the same stuff. Every person has an old **Adam nature** even though that nature can take many different forms. One unsaved man might be a murderer and another unsaved man might be a doctor who has saved the lives of many people. Do they both have the same **Adam nature**? \_\_\_\_\_ You may form a piece of clay into a knife or you may form it into a baby bottle. They are both made from the same clay, even though one seems much more harmful than the other.

The same thing is true with people. The sinful nature that is in your heart is just as corrupt and wicked as the sinful nature that is in the worst criminal who has ever lived. It is the same old nature no matter what form it might take. The wolf that leaves sheep alone is just as much a wolf as the wolf that attacks the flock. One wolf does not seem as bad as the other wolf but they are both wolves. You can take a pig and clean it up and dress it up, but is it still a pig?

\_\_\_\_\_ Have you changed its nature (its pig nature)? \_\_\_\_\_ Does it still love to wallow in the mud (2 Peter 2:22)? \_\_\_\_\_

There might be a very cruel father and there might be another man who is a very good and kind father. Both are unsaved. Do they both have the same **evil nature** (see Matthew 7:11)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Think about a rich man and a poor bum. Do they both have the same nature? \_\_\_\_\_

Think about a very intelligent man and a very unintelligent man. Do they both have the same **Adam nature**? \_\_\_\_\_ You might try to help an old lady cross the street or open the door for her at the grocery store. Your friends might try to throw snowballs at her. You seem less cruel than your friends, but do you still have the same **nature** as your friends? \_\_\_\_\_

Can an unsaved person quit smoking? \_\_\_\_\_ Can an unsaved person decide never to use swear words? \_\_\_\_\_ Can an unsaved person decide to go to church every Sunday? \_\_\_\_\_ Do these things mean that there is a change of nature? \_\_\_\_\_ How does God describe the **old man** (Ephesians 4:22)? \_\_\_\_\_ You can take a corrupt apple and put candy or chocolate all around it, but is it still a corrupt apple? \_\_\_\_\_

### How Can I Become Different?

How can I change the inside? How can I become different? How can I get a different nature? This world is filled with people who all have the same kind of **Adam nature**. How can I be different? Why does God want me different? Why does God want to change me?

Can other people make me different? No, they have the same nature I do. They can influence me for good or for bad, but they cannot change me. The clay can be shaped and reshaped in many ways by many hands, but it will always be clay.

Can religion make me different? If I go to church and pray and sing hymns, will this change my nature? Remember, a dressed up pig is still a pig.

Can evil angels (demons) make me different? No, because they are sinful like I am. The devil does not have the power to give me a new nature and he wouldn't do this even if he could: "the devil \_\_\_\_\_ from the beginning" (1 John 3:8).

Can good angels make me different? Even though they are good and holy, they cannot make me good and holy.

Who can change me? Who is the only Person who can make me different? \_\_\_\_\_ "With men this is \_\_\_\_\_ but with \_\_\_\_\_ all things are \_\_\_\_\_" (Matthew 19:26). Who is the only person who can save me and change me (Acts 4:10-12)? \_\_\_\_\_

### A Miracle Is Needed

A miracle is needed to change the color of an Ethiopian's skin. Do you think God could do this if it pleased Him (Luke 1:37)? \_\_\_\_\_ A miracle is needed to change the spots of a leopard. God could do it! God could give the leopard stripes and change the leopard into a brand new creature! Nothing is too hard for Him.

Today God is able to do a miracle in the human heart: "Therefore if any man be \_\_\_\_\_ he is a **new creature**" (2 Corinthians 5:17). God is able to give a person a brand new nature and God does this the moment a person receives Christ as Saviour. How is this **new nature** described (see Ephesians 4:24)? Is it good or bad? \_\_\_\_\_ Is it holy or unholy? \_\_\_\_\_ Is it righteous or unrighteous? \_\_\_\_\_

### What Happens to the Old Nature?

When a person is saved, the old sinful **Adam nature** does not go away. It is still there and it is just as sinful as ever! The unsaved person only has one nature: the Adam nature. The saved person has two natures: the Adam nature and the new holy nature. Every believer has a battle between the two natures: "For the \_\_\_\_\_ lusteth against the Spirit, and the \_\_\_\_\_ against the flesh; and these are \_\_\_\_\_ the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). The believer can either be controlled by the flesh (the old nature received from Adam) or he can be controlled by God the Holy Spirit. How can you tell if a person is controlled by the flesh (see Galatians 5:19-21)? How can you tell if a person is controlled by the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23)?

"Lord, I thank you that the Lord Jesus died for me so that I no longer need to be controlled by old sinful nature. When Christ died, I died, and I now am a new creature in Christ. Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20). Thank you Lord for the new life you have given to me in Christ. I don't want to live the way I used to live when I was unsaved."

### What Do Others See When They Look at Me?

As people look at me, what do they see? Do they see a difference in me? Am I lost or am I saved? Am I doing good or am I doing wrong? Does my life reflect what is *right* or does my life reflect what is *not right*? Am I dead or alive (1 John 5:12)?

Am I like the crowd or am I unlike the crowd? In what ways am I alike? In what ways am I different? Do I stand out in the crowd as different or do I blend into the crowd? Suppose you were to put one tomato in the middle of a pile of 5,000 tomatoes. Would this tomato stand out in the crowd of tomatoes as different or would it be lost in the pile? If you put an orange in the middle of the pile of 5,000 tomatoes, could you easily spot it? The orange is different and it stands out! People can spot what is different! Do you think people spotted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when they were the only ones not to bow down (see Daniel 3:5,6,12)? Were they lost in the crowd or did they stand out?

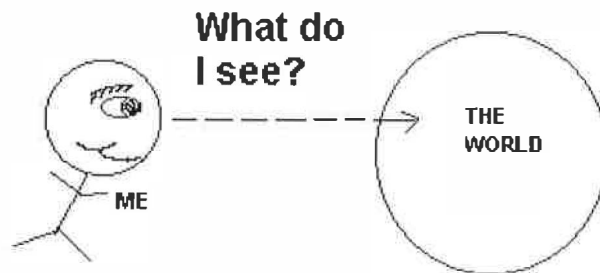
Perhaps there is only one person out of all of the students in the school who bows his head and thanks God for the food before eating lunch. Do you think people would spot this? The unsaved do pay attention and they do see a difference (see 1 Peter 4:2-4)!

### Who Knows Me?

Do your parents know you? Do your brothers and sisters know you? Do your friends in school know you? Who else knows you?

Today you are known for good or bad, for right or wrong. As you grow older, more and more people will get to know you. You are known now, but you will become known more and more as you get older. As people know you and get to know you, what will they see in your life? Will they see the wrong or the right? Will they see Satan or the Saviour? Will they see the **Adam nature** or the **new nature**?

### What and Whom Do I See?



I am part of this planet! People know me and I know them. They see me and I see them. As I scan the people around me, what do I see? What problems do I see in the world? If people did not have **Adam natures**, would there be all of these problems? I need to pay attention to what I see in the world and learn to see things clearly.

### A Witness

I have a real place in this world and I have a real part. As I learned in Chapter 1, my life produces ripples that are felt all over the world! My life is important. Even though I am only one person, my ripples are felt! And as I grow older my ripples will be felt more and more (just like a rock produces more ripples than a pebble).

I must make a choice. Will I live for God and for good and for rightness or will I live for Satan and for bad and for wrongness? I must decide. I cannot be neutral. I must not be like the Civil War soldier who wanted to be neutral and not take a side. He wore confederate pants and a union shirt. The confederate soldiers put bullets through his top and the union soldiers put bullets through his pants! **"Choose you this day whom ye will serve"** (Joshua 24:15).

I am surely seen in this world by the people around me, by angels good and bad, and most of all **by God** (see Psalm 14:2 and Hebrews 4:13).

May God help me to see those around me and understand them better and to be a witness to them, pointing them to the only true God (John 17:3). This set of notes will help me to see the world and to understand it better. There is much to see and there is much to know!