

# Lecture 2 — The Second Man — Conquering.

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*Matthew 3, 4; Luke 2 - 4.*

## **Young Men of Scripture.**

### **Nine addresses to young men.**

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We have tonight a much happier subject before us than last Lord's Day evening. Then we saw in Genesis 3 the complete defeat and utter rout of the man to whom we are all related by nature. We saw the first man beaten, crushed, conquered, and utterly overcome of Satan, and finally driven out from Paradise by the righteous verdict of God. Yes, he was defeated, disgraced, and driven out into the world, where Satan, sin, and death have reigned right on till the moment of the coming into the world of Him about whom I have read to you this evening. It is no good for us to deny the fact that we all were related to that fallen man. We are all descendants of that man, and he is a ruined man, — a doomed man, an undone man, a lost man, — and so also are all his family. You are lost, young man, if you have not met Jesus. I do not know whether you have yet come across the path of this victorious Man of whom I have read, but if not, my earnest prayer is that you may tonight cross His path ere it be too late. He will bless you; He will save you! How do you know? you say. Because He has blessed and saved me, and this He did when I was about the age of most of you — twenty years old.

Four thousand years had rolled by since the time we spoke of last Lord's Day evening. That four thousand years of the history of man and of the world, from Adam to Christ, had been marked on man's part by a continuous course of sin and disobedience. Man failed everywhere. Adam's eldest son slew his brother; Noah, put upon a new earth, became drunk. I wonder if any young man here has ever been similarly seen of God. You cannot point a finger at Noah. Noah was a sinner; so are you. Noah sinned; so have you. Pass down the stream of time. In Abraham's day man had become an idolater (see Joshua 24: 2). Let me take the history of Israel. The Lord gave to Aaron a wondrous privilege — that of the priesthood — yet the sons of Aaron offered strange fire to God. The mightiest and wisest king the world ever saw, about whose wisdom there is no doubt, and to whose magnificence nothing can in any wise compare, — for nothing has yet exceeded the glory of the reign of Solomon, — broke down utterly. He "loved many strange women," and "his wives turned away his heart after other gods" (1 Kings 11: 1-13). The fact remains, the first man is a downright failure. His heart is at a distance from God, and he is a sinner in the springs of his nature. He is under the power of Satan; and, depend upon it, if the devil has got a hold of one, he is not going to give that man up in a hurry — not if he can help it.

But you say, I don't believe in the devil. Possibly not; but if you deny the personality of Satan, you seal your own condemnation. Mark that! If you deny the reality of the power of Satan and his personality, you will have to give up God's Christ, who appears on the scene, after the pathway of the first man — oppressed and governed by Satan — had been one of sin, sorrow, misery, and distance from God for four thousand years. At length "the dayspring from on high" dawned on this world. I do not wonder that heaven went into an ecstasy when the blessed Jesus was born. I am not surprised that when the angels of the Lord announced to the shepherds of Bethlehem the glorious tidings, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2: 11), that heaven went into ecstasy. I would that your heart knew a little about it. Why did heaven go into ecstasy? I will tell you why. It recognised that if a Saviour sent of God had come there was a clear solution of the difficulty as to how man was to be saved from his lost condition. "God was manifest in the flesh." The Eternal Son of God was to be man's Saviour, come down from heaven to earth, and there appearing as "the Man Christ Jesus."

His character and office were divulged in the words, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST the LORD." Before His birth, His name was pronounced. "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest." So heard Mary (Luke 1: 31, 32).

Again, Joseph, His reputed father — for according to Jewish law, as soon as two were betrothed they were regarded as man and wife, hence Joseph was regarded as His father though we know he was not His father — ere the child was born, was thus addressed by the angel of the Lord, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS." Charming name! There is no name like it. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." Why? "For he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1: 20, 21). Are you among His people yet? Come, what man amongst you can honestly say, "I belong to His people"? "He shall save his people from their sins," — that is the point. My friend, let me ask you, has the name of Jesus any charm for you? It is a precious name, and when the name of every man that the earth has thought much of has gone for ever and been forgotten, the name of Jesus shall be the song and eternal joy of His people! True, it is written, "Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?" (Ps. 41: 5). His name perish! Ah! thank God, never, never! Do you not know what God says? "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever" (Ps. 45: 17). Thank God, I am among those worshipful rememberers; I hope you will be also, my friend. Think of it! His name perishing! Never! Thank God, He has died, but He died for us! He could die for us, just because He was exempt from death. Himself having died, and risen again, He has now a name above every name — the name of Jesus. And I want your heart tonight for that blessed Jesus, if it has never been won for Him before.

We get the account of our Lord's birth in the 2nd of Luke, and it also tells us of His childhood. There, in the words of Scripture, we are told He was subject to His parents, and that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2: 52). At twelve years He is seen in the temple among the doctors, — not with the pertness of the present day, when many a child of twelve thinks that he knows far better about things than his father. What a beautiful moral picture! "They found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both

hearing them and asking them questions." The veil now drops for eighteen years, and what took place in these eighteen years Scripture is silent about, save that He was subject to His parents. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mark 6: 3) were apparently the words of careless and contemptuous unbelief. But I do not think these eighteen years were idle moments for the Blessed Lord. He was ever about His Father's business. This blessed One, while Himself a real, true man, was the eternal Son of God, and had visited the earth in grace. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14). God Himself, in human form, dwelt upon the earth. That is one side of the truth; but, on the other, that the Lord Jesus wrought with His own hands, in these years of seclusion and retirement, seems quite conclusive.

At length the moment arrived when God called forth His Son — this blessed, lowly, obedient Man, — and He came forth. What to do? To grapple with the foe that overcame the first man. At that time there was a great movement amongst the Jews. John the Baptist had been stalking through the land. A man of mighty power, he had been pressing home upon men their sins. John did not mince matters. All are sinners, and all have to meet God about their sins. You have sinned. I have. Every man has. "All have sinned." Does God make light of sin? He would not be God if He did. You may make light of sin now, but by-and-bye you will not. John preached repentance and baptism unto the remission of sins. Men were troubled. Would to God they were troubled now! Men felt they were under the condemnation of God. They felt their sins. John could only tell them to be baptized for the remission of sins. He could not, as I do, preach present forgiveness to them. But while he was going on with his work, and preaching to repentant multitudes along the banks of the Jordan, an unknown Man draws near. As the 1st of John has it, "John saw Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus desired to be, and was baptized, — not surely as confessing sins, for He had none, but as taking His place in grace with the godly, who showed they were such by their actions, — and, having been baptized, the heavens were opened, and — striking fact — when He comes into public notice, you find Him a praying Man.

In Luke's Gospel you will find the Lord Jesus is seen before God in prayer seven times, and here is the first instance. You have before you here the sinless Man in perfect dependence on God, and to Him the Father says, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased;" and I shall show you, I trust from Scripture, one witness after another proving the sinless perfection of this blessed Man. He Himself said, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8: 46.) The officers of the Pharisees sent to take Him came back, overwhelmed by the grace and power of His words, and declared, "Never man *spake* like this man" (John 7: 46). Pilate, when Christ was brought into his judgment hall, said three times over, "I find no fault in him" (John 18: 38, 19: 4, 6). The dying thief said, "This man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23: 41). Paul wrote of Him that He "knew no sin," but was "made sin for us" (2 Cor. 5: 21). Another apostle says of Him, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2: 22). And a final witness adds, "In him is no sin" (1 John 3: 5). My friends, this is a unique Man. This Man stands alone in the glory of His person, — unique in the fact that He was absolutely sinless. But mark! he was a real man, a true man, a genuine man, a man as much as I am a man — sin alone excepted.

We have seen that when God introduced the first man he was "out of the earth, made of dust"; but "the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15: 47). What a wonderful thing that into a world of sin and death there should come a Man who was the Lord from heaven! He

brought God to man in His life, and He brings man to God in righteousness by His death. We must not be carried away with the idea that the incarnation of this Blessed One has drawn man to God, or that because Christ became a man, man has somehow been lifted up to God. No such doctrine is in Scripture. His own words were, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12: 24). But, first of all, He is tried, tested, tempted, and proved, and, thank God! He comes out the victor — the conqueror of the one who conquered the first man; and when His victory over Satan was complete, and when He might have retraced His steps to heaven with perfect freedom, what did He do? He turned and went down and died for you and me. Tonight I say to you, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" And who is this Jesus? The Eternal Son of God. Jesus became man in this world in order to deliver man from the power of the enemy.

In Luke 3 we see that the Holy Ghost falls upon Him as the expression of His Father's delight in Him. God delights in this Man on the ground of His own perfection — His own sinless perfection. In this chapter, too, observe in passing, that the genealogy of Jesus is directly traced up to God. I wish to bear strenuous testimony against the idea that man is merely developed protoplasm, or, if you like, an improved descendant of an ape. Man has sprung from God, as the book of Genesis tells us, and when Jesus appears among men His genealogy, as a true veritable real man, is traced by way of Heli up to God. Had man sprung from the lower animals, here would have been the place to record such a fact, and we should have had, "Seth, which was of Adam, which was of the lower animals." Instead thereof we read, "which was of God" (Luke 3: 23-38). Again, we read, "We also are his offspring" (Acts 17: 28).

Jesus was the Son of God in two ways. He was the Eternal Son — ever with the Father. But we read, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (Heb. 1: 5); He was therefore Son of God as man born in time. Then we read that "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil." Observe that His temptation was in the wilderness. Adam, on the other hand, was in paradise — Eden if you please — the garden of delight. He had everything to his hand. Everything that could possibly minister to his happiness and joy was given him by God, yet he fell into Satan's hand, and became the dupe and vassal of Satan from that day forth. Christ was led into the wilderness, and there was tempted forty days. He was not in paradise, but Scripture tells us "in the wilderness, forty days, tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts" (Mark 1: 13). Not only was He with the brute creation, but observe there was nothing to meet or minister to Him. Scripture tells us He fasted for forty days. It was a time of perfect privation.

He was tempted of the devil for forty days, but the great temptation was at the end of the forty days, and it was threefold, in "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." It was the same threefold temptation in the garden of Eden. When Eve "saw that the tree was good for food," — that is the lust of the flesh, — "and that it was pleasant to the eyes," — the lust of the eye, — "and a tree to be desired to make one wise," — that is the pride of life, — "she took of the fruit thereof." Satan passes before the Lord Jesus the same character of temptation. The first, "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread," was a *personal* temptation — Help yourself, use your own power. The second is a worldly temptation; Satan offers Him all the kingdoms of the world, if He will give up His allegiance to God. The last temptation is of a spiritual nature. He would be an object of interest to every one. In the first

place Satan says, "Take care of yourself, think of yourself, make these stones into bread. Do better for yourself than God has done for you." That was a personal temptation. In the second place he shows Him the whole of the kingdoms of the world in a moment, and says, "I will give you a good place in the world." How many a young man has sold his soul for a good place in the world! Alas! how many! Lastly, Satan would have Him put God to the test by casting Himself from the pinnacle of the temple

A clever man once said to me, "I don't believe in this story of a personal devil, the devil is inside a man." What is the devil then? You reply, The devil is the proclivity in a man's own heart to evil. You believe that? Stop! If that be true we cannot be saved. Why? The answer is simple. If you think that the devil is the proclivity in man's heart to evil, you have at once to admit that there were proclivities to evil in the heart of Jesus, for He was a man, and was "tempted of the devil," and so you have lost the Saviour. The man with proclivities to evil in his heart cannot be your Saviour nor mine. No' no, my friends, God's Word is plain and distinct. There were no proclivities to evil in Jesus, yet He was tempted of the devil. Thank God, He was a sinless Man, and we have in this passage Satan coming up and testing Him with this temptation of a three-fold character.

What is His defence? He only quotes Scripture. He is a truly dependent Man, and clings to God, and God only, and how does He meet the devil? With the sword of the Spirit in His hand — the Word of God — and not merely the Word of God, but *quoted as the Word of God*. Jesus rebuts and defeats the devil, only by quoting Scripture as being the Word of God. "It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God," defeats the first assault. The second temptation is met in the same way. The devil takes Him up and shows Him the kingdoms of the world. Christ knows that they belong to Him, but He will not take the world in its sinful state. He will have the kingdoms of the world, but that will be on the ground of redemption, and He will have them from God's hand, and not from the devil's hand. His answer is simple again, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The last temptation suggested that Christ should throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to test God, and make Himself an attraction. If you got to the top of the Scott Monument, and were perfectly certain that you could throw yourself down without injuring yourself, I am sure not one of you would refuse to do it. You would attempt it, just to show that you could do it, and you would be an object of interest to all. That is the pride of life.

It is well to note that Satan can quote Scripture to trap the unwary. He quotes, or rather misquotes Scripture in this last temptation, citing from the 91st Psalm — "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." But have you observed that the devil omits four little words? God had said, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee *in all thy ways*." The devil dropped those words out. Since that day often has he misquoted Scripture to tempted souls, and has turned them into paths of sin and danger. But Jesus knew the Scriptures, clung to Him who had written them, and by dependence gained a moral victory over Satan, who then "departed from him for a season."

Before I leave this part of my subject, however, I may add a few words that may help you. Moses, we are told now-a-days, is to be regarded as a very old-fashioned, obsolete, and

unreliable author. In fact, it is very boldly affirmed that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. If, therefore, you will be counted wise, and up to date, you will have to entirely disregard the Pentateuch, and cut these five books right out of your Bibles. That is what our learned religious infidels, and higher-criticism professors, are telling us now-a-days. It is a very remarkable thing, however, that in this three-fold assault Jesus answers Satan from the Pentateuch, and the Pentateuch only, which, later in His life, He frequently attributes to Moses. We had better hold with Jesus than with His foes in this matter. These wiseacres, that are cutting up Scripture now-a-days, forget that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. God's Word is what the devil hates. He cannot abide Scripture; and the secret of the strength of the young men — in the sense in which John speaks of them, as being Christians, of course — lies in their possession of the Word of God. I believe some of you here are Christians. If you will go on growing in the knowledge and the service of the Lord, and if you are going to get the victory over the devil, you will only do so by the use of Scripture; for it, and it alone, is the sword of the Spirit.

But look again at this scene in Luke 4. It is beautiful! Satan retires beaten. We saw last Lord's Day the first man driven out from Eden. Satan was the conqueror, the victor, and man was defeated; but here I find that a Man leaning in dependence upon God has defeated Satan at every point. I read, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." Satan retired beaten, and he is always beaten when we quote Scripture as the Word of God. Young men, study it; may it be precious to your souls; make it the man of your counsel, the man of your right hand. First of all, the Word lets you know that you are saved by faith in Jesus, and then it guides and helps you through the pathway in this scene. We must meet temptation. I do not think the devil tempts sinners — them he governs, and impels to evil. He only tempts God's children. His own cohorts he leads on blindfold to eternal ruin. He does not need to tempt them; they are in his power. He places temptation before the man who is out of his power. The man who is in his power he leaves alone. If Christ has not delivered you, you are still the vassal of the devil, and are under his influence, for he "deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12: 9).

Mark now how the Lord proceeds. Having defeated the enemy, He goes out into the world to deliver man, and His pathway is one of goodness and mercy. Miracles of mercy on every hand proclaim Him to be the Son of God, and the Christ of God. When you come to the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel you find Him going up to the top of the mountain, where He is transfigured before three of His disciples; while the Father again confesses Him, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." He might have passed up into glory from the mount of transfiguration, but instead of that He turns in grace and goes down to die, that others, redeemed by His death may be associated with Him in the glory of which He is deemed worthy as Man. As He goes down He casts out devils once more; and one of His servants — John — comes and tells Him, "We saw one casting out devils in thy name," His name was mighty, it and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9: 49, 50).

Well, you say, I think I am for Him. Stop. At that moment He claimed all that were not against Him, as being for Him. If you pass on to Luke 11 the whole thing is reversed. There His opposers were beginning to say, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils" (ver. 15). His reply is remarkable, — "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he

taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is *not with me is against me*: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (vers. 21-23). You see the point. If you are not thoroughly *for* Him, you are *against* Him. That is how Christ regards you. But who is the strong man? I have no doubt it is the devil: the strong man is Satan. He is too strong for you, and too strong for me — for every man. And how is he armed? I will tell you. He is armed with what will overcome you, and with what will keep your conscience quiet. He says to a young man, "What is the good of your thinking now of your soul? you will have plenty of time yet when you are old."

Stay! who gave you a lease of your life, who gave you the assurance that you will see tomorrow morning? that you will not be launched into eternity? I only heard tonight of a doctor who went to visit a patient on Thursday. The lady called attention to his looking ill. "There is not much the matter," said he, and promised to look in the following day. She looked for him on the morrow, but he did not come, and what was the reason? He was dead. He had poisoned his finger while dressing the foul wound of a patient; his own finger being scratched, had absorbed the poison, and he died within the twenty-four hours. If within twenty-four hours you were to die, where would you spend eternity? You had better know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. There is a strong man holding you, but there is yet a stronger — Jesus. The world is Satan's palace, and sinners are his goods; but there is a Saviour — a blessed Saviour. And how does he become a Saviour? By coming down and dying for men. The query, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?" has its answer in Christ and His work. "Thus saith the Lord, Even the captive of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered" (Isa. 49: 24, 25). Christ as conqueror of the mighty is the deliverer of the captive sinner.

You must have to do with this stronger Man. If you do not meet Him in the day of grace, you will have to meet Him in the day of judgment. Already has He stood at man's bar, and been rejected of man. Pilate said, "Behold the man!" in the day when His foes clamoured for His blood; and you know the end of the story, how they crowned Him with thorns, and nailed Him on the cross between two thieves. It was at that juncture that one dying thief, turning to the other, said, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23: 40, 41). Mark these words, "This man hath done nothing amiss." I tell you of the death of a Man who did nothing amiss. I think I hear that poor dying thief saying to his neighbour, "You and I never did a right thing, and here is a Man who never did a wrong thing, and I am going to trust that Man." His faith found vent in the prayer, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." To that cry of faith Jesus replied, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." We saw a thief driven out of man's paradise because of sin, last Sunday night; and tonight I see a thief going into God's paradise, on the ground of redemption, with the Saviour who dies for him. Blessed news is that for you and me.

Thus then did Jesus die, and after three days God raised Him. I know they put guards round the tomb, and sealed it to boot. What sealed that tomb? Fear! Who put guards round the tomb? Cowards! Only think of it! Guarding a dead man. It was the desire of the world to keep Him in the grave; but they could not. I believe Christ arose before the stone was rolled away; but the stone was rolled away to let you and me look in, to see therein the proofs of the victory of the

risen and victorious Saviour. That is the glorious fruit of the cross. You see the wages of sin is death. Death was the evidence of Satan's victory over the first man. Christ has gone down to death for the glory of God, for the blessing of man, and for the destruction of Satan's power. I do not doubt Satan thought he had scored a great success when the world witnessed Christ's death, but it was the most foolish thing he ever did. Christ has gone into death and annulled it. He has gone into the stronghold of Satan, and has demolished it. He has also put away sin. He has met the claims of God in righteousness. He has annulled death, and defeated Satan. He has wrought the work which gives you a righteous title to go where He is now. He was not defeated by death. No, no! His apparent defeat was His most glorious victory. As the little hymn sweetly says:

"By weakness and defeat,  
He won the meed and crown;  
Trode all our foes beneath His feet,  
By being trodden down.  
He hell in hell laid low;  
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew:  
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so  
And death by dying slew."

By death He overthrew the power of Satan. He rose from the dead, and what is the next thing? God calls on men everywhere to repent because "he has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17: 31).

Jesus is now exalted at God's right hand. It is as the triumphant Victor that He is now seen by faith there. His exaltation is the witness on God's part of His delight in Him, and of His absolute satisfaction in the work which He accomplished in His death. His brow is glory-crowned as the answer to His sorrow, suffering, and death. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance . . . and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5: 31). These gifts of grace the glorious Conqueror bestows in righteousness on the men whom Satan vanquished. Who of you has received them?

Observe, you will have to meet Jesus. You may see Him now by faith. You and I must meet the Lord by-and-bye, for we are told "every eye shall see him." Every eye, — your eye, my eye, shall see Him. Would you like to see Him? If you were never the Lord's before, be so tonight! Make up your mind for the Lord tonight. "He that is not for me is against me," and those who are not for Him are yet on the side of the prince of this world. Let your heart be won for Christ. Lose no time! You are a sinner, a child of Adam, sentenced to death, — a ruined, sinful, fallen man, with death, and the grave, and eternal judgment staring you in the face. But there has

come into this world One, who has become a man so that He might die. You and I die because we are men, but He became a man that He might die, and is now risen and seated at the right hand of God, and is saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Look up and see the ascended, victorious Saviour. Look up and see the One who has grappled with the foe and beaten him. Look up and trust the One who is a living Saviour at God's right hand. Will you not believe Him, guilty soul, from this night?

My friends, do you think it is a poor thing for a young man to be an out-and-out Christian? There is nothing grander, finer, more splendid than for a young man to be on the Lord's side, and I thank God, from the bottom of my heart, that I was converted when young, for the last three-and-thirty years have been spent in the Saviour's interests, instead of in the service of the devil. If you have not yet decided to be upon the Lord's side, I pray you come to Him now. God bless you, and save you tonight.