



Introduction

The Bible is a story of light for the darkness because it is the story of Jesus, and he is the light of the world. The opening chapter of Scripture has the famous pronouncement, “‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). The closing chapter of Scripture is also about light, but not the kind God creates. John writes about the light that God *is*. He says, “And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (Rev. 22:5).

Between the light from God at creation and the light of God in the new creation, there is a story of God’s good world being plunged into darkness—the darkness of sin and death, of principalities and a raging dragon. And into this darkness God spoke a promise, words about a son who would bring salvation and who would reign in righteousness.

The Old Testament gives signs of this coming redemption. When you read the Old Testament as an unfolding story that anticipates the events in the New, you can see types and shadows of Christ and his redeeming work along the way. There



Introduction

are certainly direct messianic prophecies, like the facts of the Savior being from Israel (Num. 24:17), from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10), from the line of David (2 Sam. 7:12-13), and from the town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). But there are also expectations that are more indirect.

Jesus taught that the Old Testament bore witness to him (Luke 24:27, 44-47). And it will be beneficial to our souls when we reflect on the Old Testament people, institutions, and events that foreshadow him. The following twenty-five advent readings are an exploration of Christological types in the Old Testament. As we behold how these ancient stories prepare the way for the Lord, let us read prayerfully and humbly, that our hearts might grow warm in the presence of the everlasting Light (Luke 24:32).



I

The First Adam

The first man was made by God, not born of a mother. This fact of creation is something no other man would ever experience. Even the Lord Jesus was born of a woman.

As the first person whom God made, Adam had a unique role in humanity. He was the head of all people, the first of his kind. Decisions that he made would matter for more than just him.

In the sacred space of Eden, God provided for him, blessing him with a fertile environment to dwell in and to cultivate. Adam was to work it and keep it (Gen. 2:15)—a pair of ideas that occurred later for priests who worked in sacred tabernacle space (Num. 18:5-7). Working it meant service, and keeping it meant guardianship.

Living in Eden involved responsibility and stewardship. Adam would rule, in accordance with the creation mandate in Genesis 1:28. God commissioned His image-bearers to subdue creation and exercise dominion. This call to *subdue* was key to what being an image-bearer meant. Like a king, Adam was to rule. And as an image-bearer, Adam's rule represented the



The First Adam

authority of God. Adam was a king of creation, but this was not a role he seized. It was a role he received.

God gave Adam a prohibition as well. He said, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17). This command was for Adam’s good, though he didn’t uphold it. When Eve gave him a piece of the forbidden fruit, he took it and ate (3:6).

Though Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord, the Lord promised a deliverer, a victor who would defeat the vile and tempting serpent (Gen. 3:15). Faced with temptation, Adam failed in the garden. But the future son of Adam would not fail.

The disobedience of Adam and the obedience of Christ are a vital part of the Apostle Paul’s argument in Romans 5. Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin (Rom. 5:12). But through the righteousness of Christ, sinners can experience justification and eternal life (5:18). Like Adam, Jesus would have a representative role. Jesus was the head of the *new* humanity, the image-bearers who are being restored through their union with the Son of God.

Paul draws a comparison between Adam and Jesus. He says Adam “was a type of the one who was to come” (Rom. 5:14). A correspondence that Adam and Jesus shared was their representative role, also known as their federal headship. In Romans 5:12-21, Paul writes bluntly about Adam’s actions. Adam committed transgression (5:14), or sin (5:16). And the result was judgment (5:16), or condemnation (5:16).

The obedience of Christ contrasts with the disobedience of Adam. “For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19). Though the effects of Adam’s



The First Adam

actions were tragic, the effects of Jesus' actions would display the surpassing grace of God toward sinners.

Given the significance of who Jesus is and what he accomplished, Paul called him "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45). In order to understand the depth and breadth of the impact that Jesus' obedience had, we have to see his victory in light of the first Adam's unfaithfulness. The first Adam turned from God's good command, but Jesus upheld and embodied divine wisdom. Jesus was the true and better Adam.

The greatness of Jesus is confirmed by his origin. Paul said, "The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). Paul's claim doesn't deny the incarnation, for Jesus was indeed born of the Virgin Mary. But the incarnation was that of the eternal Son of God, the one by whom and for whom all things were made (Col. 1:16).

Paul's comparisons between the first and last Adams continue. "As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:48). What we needed was a new Adam, and the man of heaven is the Adam we needed. If through Adam came sin and condemnation, then through Christ come forgiveness and justification.

The Lord Jesus was born so that he might fulfill the promise of a victorious son who would defeat the serpent (Gen. 3:15). He is the greater Adam whose faithfulness and righteousness would be the refuge for all who come to him by faith. And through faith in Christ, a new and real and everlasting union exists between the sinner and the Savior. Paul said, "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49).

The incarnation was for salvation. Christ became like us so that we could become like him. Left to ourselves, we are only

The First Adam

like the first Adam, transgressors who deserve of judgment. Adam was a man of earth, and we are also those of earth. In order to be fitted for heaven and new creation, a greater work was needed that could undo and overcome the scope of the fall. So into the fallen world came the Son of God, full of grace and truth. The Word became flesh because we are flesh.

Mary gave birth to the man of heaven, the last Adam. Just as the phrase “*first* Adam” means there was no representative preceding Adam, so the phrase “*last* Adam” means there will be no Savior beyond Jesus. Paul didn’t call Jesus the “next” Adam. He called him the “last Adam.”

The advent of Christ was the inauguration of God’s kingdom. The promised victory had come, and the man of heaven had been born. The first Adam’s transgression would be followed by the last Adam’s submission. In the wilderness where Jesus was tempted, he overcame the devil’s snares in every case (Matt. 4:1-11).

When that ancient serpent spoke tempting words, they met the holy defiance of the Son of God. Jesus would not waver, and he would not compromise. No doubt the devil remembered how things went with the first Adam in the garden. This time, things would be different. As the incarnate Son of God, the last Adam subdued the evil one and exercised dominion in the wilderness.