



# A BETTER WAY





Simon Austen writes as a gifted preacher, desiring to explain the message of the Bible as a whole and to show how the Lord Jesus Christ is the key to unlock its meaning. In a sense, each chapter is a gospel presentation, with a different starting-point in the Old Testament, but always leading us to Christ. It is a helpful model for preachers and other Bible teachers and could also be used as the basis for a home-group study course. I warmly commend it.

**David Peterson, Principal  
Oakhill College, London**



Once again we must thank Simon Austen for writing clearly and compellingly – and with a welcome regard for the capacities of a wide-ranging readership. *A Better Way* brings us an attractive survey of the Christ-centred truths running right through the Scriptures. It will have a happy appeal for the new and enthusiastic generation of Bible students that we now see emerging world-wide. Equally it will bring clarification and fresh stimulation into the arena of preachers, Bible class leaders and theological seminars.



**Richard Bewes, Rector  
All Souls Church, Langham Place, London**

This is a superb, engagingly written and immensely timely book. Without burying you in the jargon of professional theologians, Simon Austen, carefully, clearly and with astute sensitivity to the text of the Scriptures, brings alive the tragically forgotten territory of the Old Testament's fulfilment in Christ. Reading this book, your understanding of the great salvation that we have in Christ will deepen, Christ will be exalted in your mind and heart, and your assurance of God's work for you in him will strengthen.

We desperately need this kind of biblical theology. Read it, and give a copy to anyone in your church who handles the word of God!

**Dominic Smart, Pastor  
Gilcomston South Church of Scotland, Aberdeen**



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**SIMON AUSTEN**  
**BETTER**  
**JESUS AND OLD TESTAMENT FULFILMENT**  
**WAY**



**CHRISTIAN FOCUS PUBLICATIONS**





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'No matter how many promises God has made,  
they are "yes" in Christ'

2 Corinthians 1:20





## Introduction



In the eighteenth century Voltaire said that 200 years later there would not be a Bible left on earth. He was wrong. The Bible remains a world best seller. And yet for most of us it is a closed book, clothed in the language of the sixteenth century, feared, neglected, misunderstood and little read. The Old Testament in particular is foreign territory. It seems alien, barbaric, uncivilized and mythical. The little knowledge we do have comes from memories of the stories we learnt at school or Sunday school – Noah and his ark, Moses crossing the Red Sea, Daniel in the Lion’s den . . . . But now we have abandoned it. Some have forgotten it and increasingly few have any knowledge of its contents, let alone any understanding of what it means. On one end of the spectrum, liberal scholarship has undermined the confidence of those who regard themselves as intellectually rigorous, and on the other end of the spectrum, stories of judgement have been twisted into fanciful tales for children, with money-making spin-offs for the toy industry.

In our schools, few pupils have any knowledge of those dim and distant days of the Bible. In my days as a school chaplain I would sometimes start a lesson by drawing a line across the board with ‘Genesis’ written at one end and ‘Revelation’ written at the other, asking





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the class to fill in any details they knew. Someone might mention two testaments; another might place Jesus hesitantly on the right hand side of the board. After a pause there might be an attempt to write ‘Moses’ somewhere in the middle of the Old. Then others would call out . . . David, Adam . . . before silence fell once again. Slowly they realised how little they knew.

Even Christians are confused. Kitchen calendar verses leave us with blessed thoughts from Proverbs or words of woe and lamentation ripped out of context to set us up for the day. Some leave the Old Testament behind, convinced that the God of the New Testament is more loving, less angry and generally nicer to know.



But the Jesus we call Lord might cause us to think differently. When he spoke to the religious leaders of the day he reminded them that the scriptures they so diligently studied – the Old Testament as we now have it – were all about him. It wasn’t a book to be neglected, but equally it wasn’t a book which should be misunderstood. It was and is a book about Jesus.



It wasn’t only his religious opponents who had missed the point. His own friends were bewildered and confused because they had failed to understand the scriptures. Luke tells us that they had ‘hoped he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.’ But their hopes were dashed in the agony of the crucifixion. Then shortly afterwards, while still in shock, they met a man on the way to Emmaus – no ordinary man, but the risen Lord Jesus, his identity hidden as they walked along the road. As he heard their uncertain attempts to make sense of his death, he said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then



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enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27). Jesus was handing the Old Testament back to his confused disciples with the simple message ‘it is about me.’

This book is a gentle attempt to give the Old Testament back to everyday Christians in just the same way. It is not a theological text book, but rather an applied tour of the Bible, showing how its message is all about Jesus. My hope is that it will give renewed confidence in that most famous of all books – and as we have renewed confidence may we also have a renewed relationship with the one of whom it speaks.





## I

### A Better Adam

One of the delights and amusements of having children is the well-meant comments from others about one's assorted offspring. Family friends and relatives look lovingly into the eyes of the young and say 'you are just like your father' (or mother, as the case may be). As a father I smile, not only because I remember the same being said of me when I was a child, but also because I wonder exactly what is meant. Does my child look like me? Do any positive qualities come to mind? Is it that as an adult, this dear old friend knows what I am really like and sees my true character reflected in my child? Does that 'where's my present?' look of my son or daughter reflect the selfish attitude with which I battle?

As we begin to think about it, our lives and characters are all very mixed. We don't have to be parents too long before we realize the raw reality of human nature. Children can be delightful and they can be obnoxious. Children can be kind and generous and they can be incredibly selfish.

The only difference between them and us is that we have learnt the social framework to mask our greed, our selfishness, our arrogance and our folly. But our hearts are no better and our motives no more pure. We are like our children and they are like us – human. And



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innate in humanity is a sinfulness that not so much *runs to* the very core of who we are, but *comes from* that very core and pervades everything we do. Only when we understand the Bible do we see where sin comes from and how it can be dealt with.

Scripture speaks of two Adams. We find one at the beginning of the Old Testament and one at the beginning of the New Testament. The first is the Adam of creation and the second Adam, or 'last' Adam is Jesus of Nazareth.

The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life giving spirit . . . The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.  
(1 Corinthians 15:45,47)

These two Adams give explanation and identity to the human race and give shape to the Bible. They explain why we are as we are and what can be done about it. All of us will not only identify with one or other of these figures, but Biblically speaking, we will be a part of them.

### **The first Adam – Perfection to Pollution**

God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' (Genesis 1:27,28)

Adam was created in the image of God to rule over creation and care for it. There was and is something distinct about humankind which makes us different from the animals. Adam was God's vice-regent, a privileged caretaker who had direct communion with God. The

New Testament even goes so far as to call him ‘the Son of God.’<sup>1</sup> It was a perfect relationship. Mankind enjoyed the presence and company of God in surroundings where there was nothing but beauty, harmony and order.

But Adam fell into temptation and sin. The one request from God was that he must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for if he did, he would die. Death would be the result of wanting to be ‘like God’ (Genesis 3:5). And that ‘being like God’ was and is expressed in disobedience. Rather than submitting to the creator and living within his loving framework of relationship, the created set himself up in opposition to the creator. When Adam took the forbidden fruit he made a bid for divine status, opting to decide for himself what was morally right and morally wrong. As he did so he brought the judgement of God on the whole of humanity. The raw reality of human nature finds its origins in the Garden of Eden.

That one event had a greater and more profound effect on the human race than any other event in history. The birth of Hitler or Stalin had a devastating effect on the lives of millions and changed the course of history, but although they affected countless individuals, both directly and indirectly, relatively few people now suffer the consequence of their actions; The decision to allow the Challenger shuttle to take off in freezing conditions in 1986 against the advice of engineers led to death and tragedy and world-wide shock, but again, very few remain personally bereaved; The temporary loss of binoculars on the look-out of the Titanic on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1912 and the decision to go full-ahead in waters strewn with icebergs led to the tragic death of 1500 people – but now it touches most of us only in the guise of



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entertainment and historical interest. Political decisions, public and private decisions about use of money and time, the concerns of what we do, when and with whom we do it, all have an influence on the lives of others, to a lesser or greater extent. But no decision affected history as much as the decision of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

When Adam disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit the whole of the created order changed. The corporate identity of mankind became a shadow of what it was created to be. Through one act of disobedience you and I became rebels against God. My sin was and is because of Adam's sin. It is not simply that I am like him, prone to sin, imitating his rebellion. The Bible tells me that his sin is the cause of my sinfulness. When Adam rebelled against God he took me with him. I don't simply imitate the sin of Adam, I participate in it. We all do.

. . . sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)

And just as the consequence of Adam's sin was expulsion from God's presence, a curse and a godless death, so it is for us. The New Testament tells me that 'All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.' (Romans 3:23). Adam's rebellion explains my rebellion and the judgement of God that befell him is the judgement of God that befalls me.

Yet in the midst of the curse that fell on Adam, Eve and the serpent, we find a promise. There in the ashes of despair we find a spark of hope. An offspring of Eve will crush the serpent. (i.e Satan)<sup>2</sup>

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.' (Genesis 3:15)

God will restore paradise. Satan (the serpent) will be destroyed. The Old Testament awaits a second Adam, an offspring of Eve, who will rescue us from the actions of the first.

### **The Second Adam – Polluted for Perfection**

One of the descriptions given to Jesus in the New Testament is 'the last Adam.' Like the first Adam, Jesus is also described as 'The Son of God.' It would be very difficult to read any one of the four gospels without being left with a clear sense that Jesus fits that description. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus' ministry begins with a heavenly declaration as to his identity. 'This is my Son, whom I love.'<sup>3</sup> And as his ministry begins, Satan and his minions are the first to spot the arrival of the second Adam. He tempts Jesus to show his true sonship as he presents him with attractive and identity-proving options in the desert: 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.' (Matthew 4:3). But Jesus would not have it. For unlike the first Adam, Jesus did not submit to the serpent's lies. 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' (1 Peter 2:22)

Rather than submit to Satan, Jesus came to crush him. He was the long-awaited offspring of Eve. That is why Luke is so keen to make the connection. After the familiar Christmas stories of the birth of the saviour king, Luke then traces the ancestry of Jesus back to Adam (and therefore Eve) so that we would understand that the promised Satan crusher has arrived.<sup>4</sup> And as if to

make is doubly clear, we find Luke's account of the temptations of Jesus in the verses that follow. Satan may have won the loyalty of the first Adam, but he was powerless to rule the second. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was the only man since Adam to live without being under the authority of Satan. His mission would take him to the cross so that Satan could be defeated and Eden restored. Jesus, the second Adam, in being the sinless man, was uniquely qualified to deal with the actions and consequences of the first.

So as we open the scriptures and begin to read, Jesus of Nazareth is already standing on the horizon. 'Where Adam stands at the beginning of human history, we see Jesus Christ. He is the son, bearing the image of his father. He overcomes in temptation and his sonship is proved in obedience.<sup>25</sup> It is this second Adam who shows a better service, giving us a better gift and taking us to a better destiny.

### **A better service**

When Adam took the forbidden fruit, he was serving no one but himself. The garden was beautiful and perfect. He had a wonderful wife and a tremendous relationship with God. Serving others would have been relatively easy. But instead he served himself. He made the choice to disobey God for no other reason than he was tempted to do so – the fruit 'was pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom.' (Genesis 3:6)

But to the same degree that Adam was self-serving, Jesus, the second Adam, was selfless and self-sacrificial. He did not live in Eden, where all was harmony and perfection. He lived in the fallen world of the selfish and the self-serving – the world as we know it today.

And yet it was in that world and for that world that he gave himself, forfeiting on the cross a perfect relationship with his heavenly Father. Jesus sacrificed himself and was cut off from God so that the world – you and me – would not suffer the consequences of our selfishness but rather experience a renewed relationship with God himself.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. (Romans 5:18)

Where Adam was selfish and self-seeking, Jesus was selfless.

### A better gift

Again, the gift of God is not like the result of one man's sin: The judgement followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. (Romans 5:16)

Adam's one sin brought condemnation on humanity. Because of the judgement on him, judgement also hangs over you and me. But I don't only participate in the sin of Adam, I also repeat it. Any look at the world and any honest account of our own lives will show that we sin. Therefore I am not only under condemnation because of what Adam did, but also because of what I continue to do. Adam was unrighteous. So am I.

But unlike Adam and me, Jesus was righteous. As I look at Adam I may know *why* I sin – but it does not stop me from sinning. I cannot hold my head up and say that I am innocent. My sin rightly deserves to be punished by a righteous God. I have rebelled against the

creator. And yet although I am deserving of his judgement, God offers me his love. Nothing I have done warrants such an outpouring of grace. There is nothing in my life which makes me worthy of the selfless act of self-substitution on the cross. My sin should have nailed me, the guilty one, to the tree of Calvary, not Jesus. Yet where I expect condemnation, I find mercy.

So if I cry out at the apparent injustice of my inclusion in the sin of Adam I should also cry over my inclusion in the righteousness of Jesus. Indeed, perhaps I should cry out at the injustice of the love of God – for the gift far outweighs the crime. It is disproportionate. Such is the love and grace of God. The gift of his death means that I can be justified, made right with God – though I deserve nothing but his condemnation.

### **A better destiny**

Adam's sin led to the spiritual death of humanity. It means that my ultimate destiny will be eternal death unless I respond to Jesus. Only in Christ can I be made alive. Through him I can have new life now and real life beyond the grave.

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)

I may feel it unjust that I am caught up in Adam's sin; after all I was not there when Adam sinned. But I still sin and deserve its consequence. Equally, I was not there when Christ died and likewise I don't deserve the consequence of what his death brings for me – a glorious

and eternal future with God. It is a tremendous privilege that although by birth I may be in Adam, by re-birth I can be in Christ.

‘Look at yourself in Adam; though you had done nothing you were declared a sinner. Look at yourself in Christ; and see that, though you have done nothing, you are declared to be righteous. That is the parallel.’<sup>6</sup>

Praise to the holiest in the height  
And in the depth be praise:  
In all his words most wonderful,  
Most sure in all his ways.

O loving wisdom of our God!  
When all was sin and shame  
A second Adam to the fight,  
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! That flesh and blood  
Which did in Adam fail,  
Should strive afresh against the foe,  
Should strive and should prevail.

**NOTES:**

<sup>1</sup> Luke 3:38

<sup>2</sup> In the book of Revelation, Satan is spoken of as a serpent (Revelation 12:9; 20:2)

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22

<sup>4</sup> Luke 3:23-37

<sup>5</sup> Edmund Clowney *The Unfolding Mystery* (Navipress, 1988) p.35

<sup>6</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *Romans* (Banner of Truth Trust) Vol. 4 (Assurance) 1971 p.274