

Introduction. I add my welcome to the one you have already received. For those of you who are visiting today, my name is David Kingston, and I am one of the elders of BCF. I also teach chemistry at Virginia Tech. I should also add that the preaching at BCF is shared by several of the elders and other gifted men, so next week Jim Krouscas, another of the elders, will be bringing the message.

As most of you know, we are preaching through Genesis this fall, and our focus this morning is on the first man, Adam, and the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

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If you want a 50 cent summary of the sermon, it is that Jesus Christ is superior to Adam in every respect, and is with God the Father and the Holy Spirit is the supreme being in the universe. He is superior to all kings and emperors, whether they are presidents of world powers such as President Obama or President Vladimir Putin, or simply kings of Hokieland such as Frank Beamer and Tim Sands.

Understanding this truth and making it part of our spiritual DNA is vital to our world view, and having the right world view is crucial to our maturity as Christ-followers. John Piper has this to say on the subject:

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“I am deeply convinced from the Bible that your eternal joy and strength and holiness depend on the solidity of this worldview [of the objective reality of God and the supremacy of Christ] putting strong fiber into the spine of your faith. Wimpy worldviews make wimpy Christians. And wimpy Christians won’t survive the days ahead. Rootless emotionalism that treats Christianity like a therapeutic option will be swept away in the Last Days. Those who will be left standing will be those who have built their house on the rock of great, objective truth with Jesus Christ as the origin, center, and goal of it all.”

John Piper, ‘The Fatal Disobedience of Adam and the Triumphant Obedience of Christ’, August 26, 2007

We begin with the creation account in Genesis. Before we read this I need to note, as Dan Mock shared some weeks ago, that Bible-believing Christ-followers have different views of the time-scale of Genesis 1-3. Some are old earthers, some are young earthers, and some like Dan are middle earthers. But all Bible-believing Christ-followers agree on a real Adam, based not only on the Genesis account but also on Paul’s teaching on it in Romans 5 and elsewhere. Let us thus turn to our Scriptures; we will look at two passages.

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Genesis 2:4-9

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens — and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground — the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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Rom 5:12-21

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

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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.

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. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Let us examine these scriptures under three aspects

1. The greatness of the first and second Adams
2. The differences between the first and second Adams
3. The result of these differences

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1. The greatness of the first and second Adams

We will look first at the first Adam

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i. He was created directly by God.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

What a privilege! After Adam and Eve all men and women were born in the usual way, through the 9-month process of conception followed by growth in the womb and finally delivery, and then childhood, adolescence, and finally adulthood. But Adam was formed by the hand of God; perfect and complete in every way.

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ii. He was created without sin. Since Adam's fall all men and women are born with the taint of Adam's sin; what theologians call original sin. This will be discussed in a later message, so I will just say this; if you do not believe in original sin it is very probable that you have never had children. From a very early age children seem to know instinctively how to do wrong; they do not need to be taught to do this. As G. K. Chesterton put it "Certain new theologians dispute original sin, which is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved." (Orthodoxy). But Adam was created without the taint of sin; without that inner inclination to lie to our advantage or to cheat to get ahead or to indulge in sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage; without the ability to become addicted to drugs or pornography or alcohol; without the anger when we are slighted or the jealousy when someone else gets a better deal than we do. None of this bothered Adam; he enjoyed perfect friendship with God, unhindered by the sin that rears up its ugly head as a barrier between us and God.

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iii. He is the father of the human race. Adam was the founder of the human race, which makes him our ancestor. Being an ancestor is a great honor, by the way; I am the proud ancestor of three great children and six wonderful grandchildren, and a week ago I was enjoying being an ancestor as two of my grandchildren snuggled up to me on the couch as we watched "The Princess Bride". But Adam has not just nine descendants but billions of them; what a privilege and honor!

One important conclusion from this, by the way, is that those of us who are Christ-followers should be free of any form of racism, as we recognize that we are descendants of one man, and have the same ancestor. Men and women of different races and different cultures are our relatives through our common father Adam, and so we of all people should welcome and respect those of different races and different cultures.

We now turn to the second Adam, our Lord Jesus. We learn that He is the second Adam from Paul's great resurrection teaching in I Corinthians 15

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1 Cor 15:21-23

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

1 Cor 15:44-49

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

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i. He is the uncreated Creator. Paul tells us this in Colossians 1

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Col 1:15-17 For by him (Jesus) all things were created:

things in heaven and on earth,

visible and invisible,

whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;

all things were created by him and for him.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

What a great Lord we have! From this passage we learn that Jesus is before all things; that is to say he is before time and before the universe was made and before anything else existed. And not only that, we learn that He holds all things together, whether it is the stars in space or the atoms in our bodies and in the world around us. Without His power the elements would disintegrate with great heat.

And notice carefully that "all things" must necessarily include Adam. So Adam was created by God, and Paul tells us that our Lord Jesus was in fact the creator or co-creator. So Jesus is superior to Adam in his creative power; Adam was created, Jesus was the Creator.

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ii. He is without sin. Jesus is not only our Creator, he is also without sin. This does not mean that He was not tempted; the gospels tell us that he was tempted in the wilderness as well as at other times, and we will come to his most severe temptation in a few moments. But the key truth to grab onto is that Jesus was tempted, but did not sin. As the writer to the Hebrews puts it

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Heb 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

And this writer then goes on to say

Heb 4:16

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

So temptation is not sin; Jesus was tempted but did not sin

Jesus know our trials and is available to us in our times of need.

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iii. Jesus is the head of all who believe.

"And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy." Col 1:18-19

So Jesus is the head of the body, while Adam is the ancestor of the human race. And what is the difference between a head and an ancestor? That is easy; a head is alive, while an ancestor is dead. We serve a risen Savior, as the Easter hymn puts it. Hallelujah!

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2. We now turn to **the differences between the first and second Adams**

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i. Both were tempted in a garden: only one yielded to temptation. The story of Adam and Eve's temptation and fall is a sad one, but it is not one that we will discuss today, since Dan will be speaking on it in three weeks. Just remember that this temptation took place in a garden; the garden of Eden. Jesus too was tempted in a garden, but in this case it was the garden of Gethsemane:

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Matt 26:36-39

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. *Yet not as I will, but as you will.*"

There is still an olive garden on the reputed site of the garden of Gethsemane, with at least one tree that is said to date from the time of Christ.

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And it was here that our Lord fought his last battle with temptation, as he prayed "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me". He shrank not only for the physical suffering he could see before him on the cross, but even more for the extreme spiritual agony he foresaw as he paid the price of death and separation from God his father as he bore the sins of Adam and of you and of me and of the whole world. But He overcame this temptation, and went on to pray "Yet not as I will, but as you will."

So Adam and Eve, in a garden and facing no real pressure, were tempted and fell. Our Lord, under extreme pressure in another garden, was tempted to quit, and resisted unto death.

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ii. The motives of their actions were different. When Adam and Eve were tempted, they were led astray by their own desires to be like God; they were led by pride and selfishness. But in Romans 5:12 Paul states "But the gift is not like the trespass." So when Jesus was tempted, his response was the opposite of Adam's; He chose the path of humility and self-sacrifice out of His love for the world, including you and me.

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iii. The effects of their actions on the world were different. Going back to Romans 5, we read (Rom 5:15-17)

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For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 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.

So the effect of Adam's sin was condemnation and death; death initially to his son Abel, death ultimately to Adam himself, and death ultimately to you and to me. "many died by the trespass of the one man"

On the other hand the effect of Christ's righteousness was justification and forgiveness. These differences are stark in their contrast: death vs life, condemnation vs. forgiveness. And all this is possible because of the grace of God "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."

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iv. The essential nature of the difference between Adam and Christ. In the last few verses of Romans 5 Paul tells us a bit more of the real nature of the difference between Adam and Christ. Rom 5:18-19

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. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

What Paul is saying here is that Adam's sin was the result of disobedience to God's will, but that Jesus Christ obeyed the will of God and so fulfilled all righteousness.

As a sidebar, we can note that the same choices confront each one of us every day. We can choose the way of Adam, of disobedience to God's revealed will, or the path of Jesus, of humble obedience to God's revealed will. Our choices will not have the cosmic consequences that Adam's horribly bad choice or Jesus' wonderfully good had, but they will make a huge difference to our lives and most likely the lives of those around us.

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3. The result of these differences

In Adam and Eve's case, their disobedience resulted in a succession of painful events in their lives. They were expelled from the garden of Eden and from the intimate relationship that had had with God. The ground was cursed because of Adam, and he was told

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Gen 3:19

By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;

And these were not the only consequences; Adam and Eve had the extreme pain of losing their son Abel, who was killed by his brother Cain, and then of losing Cain who was forced to wander the earth. Finally after living 930 years, Adam died.

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In our Lord's case, however, the story is dramatically different. We read in Philippians 2:8-11

And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death —
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

What a contrast; every knee shall bow to our Lord! Every tongue confess that He is Lord! That word "every" is pretty much all-inclusive; it includes President Obama and President Putin, coach Beamer and President Sands; it includes Adam; it includes you. Ready or not, your knee will bow! The only question for you to consider is "will your knee bow in humble and grateful adoration?" or "will your knee bow in fear and humiliation as you hear the dreadful words 'depart from me, for I never knew you'?"

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4. Some final words

1. These verses in Romans 5 contain warnings for all who reject Jesus Christ. We live in a world where we are all under the judgment of God:

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Rom 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."

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2. These verses contain precious promises to all who trust Christ for salvation. God's grace through Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death is available

Rom 5:17 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.

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God's grace is abundant

God's righteousness is a free gift

God's people will reign in life.

What a great God and Savior we have!!