

The Character of Adam

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I was at the Baptist Church in Memphis and I was walking in those days. My wife, well, my wife would travel with me. She would hold my arm and I would walk, but the thing I remember about that church is there were 22 steps from the parking lot where I was to park to the pulpit. Twenty-two steps. Stuff like that stands out in the mind of handicapped people.

Well, it's good to see you tonight. Turn, please, to the book of Romans 5. Romans 5:12. I want to follow up with the theme from last night and I want to talk to you about the federal headship of Adam. Are you interested in such things? All right, let's read the passage.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift:

Listen carefully now,

for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

I want us to view Adam in five regards. First, I want you to see him as the first man. 2. I want you to see Adam as the free man. Thirdly, I want us to consider Adam as the fallen man. Fourthly, I want to talk about Adam as the federal head of man. And number 5, I shall talk about him as the figurative man.

In the late 1980's, I was elected to serve on the Trustee Board of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here in your state, in Louisville. At my first official gathering with the Trustee Board, we were at a banquet at the Galthouse downtown in Louisville. Many

round tables throughout the room and trustees would be at the tables and there would be at least one professor or administrator at that table. The idea was that we could get acquainted with each other.

So you have to talk about something when you are sitting at the table with people you don't know, and the subject was broached at our table, "Do you, sir, believe in the historicity of the first 11 chapters of the book of Genesis?" And the professor responded, "Yes." And then the question was narrowed a bit, "But do you, sir, believe that Adam and Eve were real historical people?" And he said, "Oh my, yes." But then the question was narrowed a bit further, "Do you, sir, believe that Adam and Eve were the first man and the first woman created directly by the agency of God, the progenitors of the human race?" And he said, "Oh, no. No, I do not believe that. I believe," said he, "that adam spoken of in the book of Genesis refers not to one man but too many men and many women."

I said, "Dr. Watts, the folks back home in Claiborne County, Arkansas, where I live and serve, would experience a high level of emotional stress if they knew that their cooperative program dollars were going to pay the salary of a professor here at their oldest seminary who was teaching another generation of preacher boys that the Adam and Eve spoken of in the book of Genesis were not the first man and the first woman created directly by the agency of God, the progenitors of the human race." And his response was this, "Brother Miller, the average Baptist back home sitting out on the front porch in the rocking chair, does not possess the acumen to understand the nuances of theology, nor are they capable of articulating theology."

Now, you folks think you know me but you don't know me as well as you think. That did not set well with this country preacher from Arkansas. It didn't set well at all and I mustered all of the grace I possessed at the moment and I said, "Dr. Watts, it is my humble opinion, sir, that some of the Baptists back home sitting out on the front porch in the rocking chair may very well have forgotten more theology than you apparently know." In the words of Hillary Clinton, "What difference does it make?" What difference does it make? Well, I'll tell you: the veracity, the reliability, the trustworthiness, the inerrancy of the Bible, that's what difference it makes. If we can't believe what the Bible says about the first Adam, how shall we believe what it says regarding the last Adam, regarding the Lord Jesus Christ? That's the difference it makes.

Now here is item number 2: I want you to see Adam as the free man. Now, go back in your minds eye, I'm not going to require you to turn back to Genesis, you know the story. I want you to see him there, God has created Adam and Eve. He has placed them in the garden. He has said, "You may eat of all of the trees of the garden except of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You may not eat of it. In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die." Do you remember the story? Now, here Adam is in a state of innocence. He has access to his Creator. There is no breach in the fellowship between them. Adam now is free, he is free to obey. There is no original sin. There is no depravity upon his nature. He is sufficient in and of himself to stand in perfect obedience to his God and the command of his God. Do you see that? You and I never were in that position. On

our best day, in our finest hour, we were never able in and of ourselves to stand in perfect obedience to God. Do you see the difference between Adam and us? He is sufficient to stand and he is free to fall. You and I were never even free to fall. We came into this world fallen. We came into this world with original sin. We came into this world depraved. We came into this world morally polluted. We were never like Adam in that regard.

I have had the privilege throughout the years of my ministry, almost 53 years, to preach on occasions for the Free Will Baptist. I love the Free Will Baptist. Several years ago, I preached at their college in Nashville. I preached for four days. I had the privilege of discussing free will with Dr. F., their elder statesman on their Bible department. It was wonderful. He and I discussed Adam's free will. I asked him the question, "Tell me in the view of the Free Will Baptist, was Adam's volition affected by the fall, and if so to what degree?" And he made an attempt to bring Adam through the fall, having been debilitated in every regard except he retained his volitional capabilities. That's the difference between Baptists and Free Will Baptists. Did y'all get that or do I need to go over that again? As a matter of fact, I had the wonderful privilege of preaching to the Free Will Baptist Church here in your town with Brother Joel Franks. Wonderful people. I have preached at their state pastor's conferences in Alabama and Arkansas, and I have found this out about them: the preachers now, often are more interested in discussing Bible doctrine than other Baptists that I know. Do you see that Adam was free but after the fall he had lost his freedom? Do you see that?

Now here's the third item: I want you to consider Adam as the fallen man. The tempter comes to Eve and she disobeys the command and she goes to Adam and he disobeys the command. He falls from this position of original innocence and sufficiency before God.

Now, three things occur when Adam falls. 1. He is now constituted a sinner in the sight of God. God no longer looks upon him as he had before the fall. God now looks upon him as a guilty sinner in his sight.

2. Adam is now corrupted as a sinner. The wool and the warp, the sum and the substance of his being now, his intellect, his emotions, his will, everything there is about him, that which constitutes him as a person is now corrupted in the sight of God. Moral corruption now pervades his being. There is now a torque on his person and this torque is toward evil. It is toward unrighteousness. It is toward ungodliness and immorality. Adam now is not the same person that he was before the fall. He is corrupted in the sight of God.

3. He is not only constituted a sinner, corrupted as a sinner, he is now condemned as a sinner. "In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die." This is physical death and it is spiritual death. Adam did not die physically until well over 900 years later, but he did die spiritually on the day he sinned against his God. Dead in trespasses and sins. Alienated, estranged and separated. There is now a breach between he and God. He is now condemned, condemned not only to die but condemned to everlasting damnation.

Now I want us to put that aside. We've seen him as the first man, the free man, and the fallen man, now I want us to begin to view Adam as the federal head of man. I want to do three things here: I want to talk about the reality of this; I want to talk about the results of it; and then I want to talk about the responses that people usually give to this kind of preaching.

Now the reality. You are aware that often in the Scriptures God deals with a larger class of people through one representative. This is not unusual. There is a striking example of this in the book of Hebrews 7. Do you remember that? It's almost a strange chapter to us. It speaks of Melchizedek. Do you remember him? Abraham had taken his small army and had gone to deliver his nephew, Lot, from the kings, and after the slaughter of the kings, he returns and he meets Melchizedek, king of Salem, the high priest of the Lord. And do you remember what Abraham did? He gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek. Now later in the chapter, he's talking about the priesthood further and he says Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek. That's kind of a strange statement, isn't it, because Levi did not live during the days of Abraham and Melchizedek. How could he have paid tithes to Melchizedek? Well, he goes on to tell us, he says he was in the loins of his father, Abraham, and the tithes that Abraham paid were counted on behalf of Levi. I can tell by looking at you, you have not read that chapter today but it's there and it flows along those lines. When God created Adam, God established him not only as the seminal head of the human race but as the federal, legal representative of the human race. What Adam did, he represented us in, what God did to Adam, he represented us in him as well.

Now let me talk about the results of this. Adam is our legal representative. He is our substitute. God, years, centuries, millenniums before you and I were ever born, God dealt with us through this representative head, and the three things that occurred to Adam when he first sinned occurred to us. By imputation, God passed these on to us, namely we were constituted sinners in the sight of God; 2, we were corrupted as sinners in the sight of God; and number 3, we were condemned as sinners in the sight of God. Do you remember verse 3 in Ephesians 2 last night? "And we were by natural generation the children of wrath." That's what happened. You don't have to teach children to sin, have you noticed? It's their nature. Have you noticed that there is a torque upon your being, it's not a torque toward righteousness or godliness, it is a torque downward toward immorality and unrighteousness.

Do you ladies know what "torque" is? Were you ever in the untenable position of having a flat tire and there is no one there to assist and you must do it yourself? So you fumble through the trunk and you locate the jack, and you get it in position, and you now must take the hubcap off and you find the four way lug wrench, and you try the different ends until you have selected the proper one that fits. Now you have the wrench in place and you put one hand on one side and the other hand on the other side and you are thinking, "Righty tighty, lefty loosy," and it still doesn't make sense. You can't figure out which way righty tighty is. But nonetheless, you've got to try one of the two ways and so you begin to push down on one side and pull up on the other, and that pressure begins to exert on the lug nut, and if you have it on properly, it will loosen it. That pressure on the lug wrench, that's torque.

There is now on the nature of mankind a pressure, a torque toward evil and, beloved, hear me well, we may not have seen yet the full depths of human depravity. We may not yet have seen the extent to which evil men might go in expressing the depths of their personal depravity in the sight of God. It's amazing as you listen to the news how inept the media are in addressing the question why do we have such evil. We were all appalled, we were shocked, most of us in this room were more shocked because of what happened Sunday in the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas, than we have been at other atrocious events. Not to say that we were not appalled at the others, it's just that they at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, they are who we are. That's who Baptists are. Do you know that most Baptist churches don't run 1,000 or 5,000, they are small groups like we are here tonight. Do you know that the average Baptist Church only has about 70 people on Sunday morning. That's who we are. That's about the size of the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, and it's as if we cannot understand why a man would do such a thing.

Now granted, there is this matter of mental illness. I don't mean to sell that short at all, and the President might very well be right, we need to give more attention to try to resolve these kinds of health issues, but you listen now: more often than not when we have these kinds of atrocities occurring in our world, it is because of the evil nature of fallen men. And do you know what? Were it not for restrained depravity, things would be worse than we have yet seen in our day. The church must fervently pray that God will restrain the natural depravity of the human heart; that he will hedge up their way with thorns and make a wall in order to prevent and protect from evil. Does that make any sense?

Does it make you to tremble when you think of the depravity of your own heart? I assume I'm preaching to the choir here tonight, I'm preaching to the cream of the crop. I mean, if you're going to come out to hear a country preacher preach on a Tuesday evening, you're usually the cream of the crop. But while that's true, is there not enough residual depravity in our hearts here tonight to put us in the dust and cause us to learn repentance over and over and over?

Now, they may be coming to get us. Do you hear?

I have given you the reality of the federal headship of Adam, I have given you the results of it. What happened to Adam, happened to us. Now here is the third thing: I want you to see the responses that people often give to this kind of preaching. There are two of them that I shall speak of. 1. "Well, that ain't fair." That's how people respond. "That ain't fair. Why should a person be judged and condemned on the basis of something someone else did? You and I were not in the garden. You and I did not partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We weren't there, why should we be held accountable? That ain't fair." And guess what? It ain't. It is not fair in our estimation of fairness. But now I'm going to give you a little sermon within a sermon. I want you to see this in the Scriptures regarding fairness.

Do you remember the story in the book of Matthew regarding the man who went out early in the morning to hire some workers for his farm, for his vineyard, and he discussed it with them and agreed that he would pay them a penny for the day? Do you remember? And then the midmorning, he hired some others, and at mid day, he hired others, midafternoon, and finally with only one hour left in the day, he hired some other workers. Now it's the end of the day and the farmer is going to settle up his debts with the workers and these people are all paid a penny. Those who have worked all the day, those who have worked half the day, and even those who worked only one hour were paid the same, and those who had worked longer began to murmur and complain and they said to the farmer, "Why have you paid them the same as you have paid us who have borne the heat and the labor of the day? This ain't fair." Do you remember the story? And the farmer replied, "Sir, I do you no harm. Did you not agree with me for a penny? Am I not doing what I promised to do? And further, am I unrighteous if I am generous to these who have only worked an hour? Do I not have the right to do with mine own money as I please?" Do you remember the story?

Now here is you a good four point sermon on this. 1. It is always too early to quit but it's never too late to start. Do you see that from that story? 2. Another man's blessing will never be your loss. Have you learned that as a Christian? Another man's blessing will never be your loss. 3. You always get better pay if you let the Lord keep the books. Have you learned that one? Now here is the fourth one, this is the one I wanted to get at: God may not always be fair but God is always just. Don't impose your own estimation of fairness on a just and holy God.

Now, can we talk further about fairness? What revelation did those antediluvians have about God, those people who lived from Adam to Noah prior to the deluge? Are you aware they only had oral traditions from occasions when God had spoken audibly? For example, the conversations in the garden of Eden with Adam. Oral tradition. And they had nature and they had conscience. That's all they had for knowing God. What might those antediluvians say in the judgment about us? We have Bibles that we have forgotten about having. Is that right? God has spoken unto us by his Son and we have a written record of that with many infallible proofs. What might those antediluvians say? I'll tell you what they might say, "That ain't fair."

What about those people in the day of Moses? Have you ever read about the Hittites and the Amorites and the Jebusites and all those other ites? What might they say in the judgment? Are you aware that God spoke to Israel on Mount Sinai while the mountain trembled and it smoked, and so fearful were the Israelites at the voice of God's thundering that they besought Moses to beseech God not to speak anymore, and with his finger God wrote the 10 Commandments on tables of stone. God gave Moses the Levitical law. He gave him the law of the sacrificial system. He gave all of those types and pictures and symbols of the Messiah and the atonement that he would make. What might they say who received no such information?

Are you aware that 3,000 years of human civilization had gone by before God ever sent a missionary beyond the borders of Palestine? Do you remember who that missionary was?

It was Jonah and when God sent Jonah to Nineveh, he didn't have much of a sermon. Do you remember what he did? Three days he traveled up and down the length and the breadth of the city and here's what he said, "Yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." What might those people say in the judgment?

Can I go further? Do you remember 2,000 years ago when the Lord Jesus established the church during the days of his personal ministry on earth, and he gave us the commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and lo, I am with you always." Now, did the Lord know when he established the church and gave us the commission, did he know that today on November 7, 2017, did God know that we would have failed in our commission to the extent that there are now over 2 billion people this very night who have not yet heard the name of Jesus? That seems incredible to us, doesn't it? When we think about technological advances, when we think about media available to us, yet one in four people extant in our world today have not heard about Jesus. What might they say about us in the judgment? "That ain't fair."

I want to tell you something, beloved, the truth is God would have been just if he had left the whole world, you and me, condemned in our sins and condemned to hell. That God would take the initiative to redeem even one of Adam's fallen race is a wonderful demonstration of his mercy and his grace. The worst thing that you could wish upon me is that I would get what I deserve. Do you want what you deserve? I think not.

Now, that's the first response, here's the second response, "What about infants who die?" Is that not the next response? Now I'm going to tell you a funny story. Can you do that here in your church? This has absolutely nothing to do with my sermon. This is just a little short break. Actually, it is serving a purpose in my sermon because I want you to be relaxed in a moment when I speak about infants who die.

Years ago, I came to Heber Springs to be the Director of Missions for the Association. I was 23 years old, didn't know beans from butter cake, but on my first Sunday there, I preached on Sunday morning and I had to travel 60 miles to the First Baptist Church in Morrilton to speak at 2 o'clock at a stewardship rally. While I was a few minutes late because of the distance, arriving at the First Baptist Church, Brother Jerry C., a friend of mine, had helped me before, I was walking in those days and he would hold my arm and I would kind of lean way over and throw my foot up on the next step and he pulled me up one step at a time. I could stop a circus by getting up steps and the folks quit singing and they just stared at me.

The brother who introduced me was blind. I knew Mr. Kirkland, he was now 80 years old. He had been blind since he was 25 and he was a winsome sort of fellow, loved humor. Boy, I sat there and watched those folks watch me and I said, "I'm going to say something funny when I come to the podium. It will help these people relax and get their mind off my affliction so they will hear my address." So in a moment of inspiration, I thought of some humor and when I went to the podium I asked this question, "Has anyone present been run over by a bulldozer?" Well, of course there wasn't one. And I

said, "Well, if there had been, then today we would have the biblical precedent on the program: The maimed, the halt, and the blind." I thought that was hilarious. Not a soul laughed. Not one. Glenda said this on the way home, "David, I pray that the dear Lord will give you enough presence of mind never to do something like that again."

But the next day she and I traveled over to DeWitt, Arkansas, where I began a revival meeting. The place was dimly lit, just a corporal's guard present. I'm glad they didn't have pews out in the foyer or the deacons would have been sitting out there. I had trained Brother Hughes, the pastor, over at his home how to help me get up the steps. We got out to the church and we got up the first step just fine and then he realized there were people here and he just froze up. Boy, he had a death grip on my right arm and I couldn't move. We were just suspended there and I thought I'm never going to get up. But finally I did and the folks just stared. They didn't sing, they didn't bow their head, they didn't even close their eyes during the prayers. They just stared at me and I thought to myself, "Man, I'm going to have to say something funny when I come to the podium. It will help these people to relax." So in a moment of inspiration, I thought of that joke I had told the day before at Morrilton and I told them about Mr. Kirkland, he built grandfather clocks. I had been to his home. He took me out to his shop and he said, "Brother Miller, I'm going to turn the light on for you." And he built these magnificent grandfather clocks. I told them about how he loved humor and how winsome he was, and I told them how when I came to the podium I asked, "Has anyone present been run over by a bulldozer?" And then I gave them the punchline, "If there had been, then today we would have the biblical precedent on the program: The maimed, the halt, and the blind." Oh, that's where that phrase came from, it went over like a lead balloon. They didn't laugh. They didn't smile. They just stared at me like a deer in the headlights. You can imagine the kind of service we had that day, but the next morning over at the preachers home where we were staying, we were having breakfast and a lady called and in the course of the conversation she shared this observation with the pastor, "Oh my, isn't it a shame that Brother Miller got run over by a bulldozer." That happened. I could write a book on stuff like that. He told us that and we're just shaking our heads, "How in this world could she have sat there and heard my story and, granted, maybe it wasn't funny to her, I get it, but how in this world could she have had me being run over by a bulldozer?"

Well, it was a classic case of hearing what you wanted to hear instead of what was actually being said. Did you know that? Did you know you have to pay attention in church or you will leave thinking Brother Grover said something that he didn't actually say. It happens all the time.

Can I take this one step further? 1971, I'm teaching the book of Romans at a church and when I got over to chapter 9, some of the folks asked the question about infants and I told them what I'm going to tell you in a minute, and 40 years later, Brother Nolan, the Chairman of the search committee called me and he said, "Brother Miller, we've got Dr. So-and-so that we are considering to be the pastor of our church and we like him, and he has you as a reference, and tonight when we were telling the church about him, one of the men in our church spoke up and said, 'Well, if he has David Miller as a reference, we can only assume that he believes like Brother Miller believes and Brother Miller believes that

babies that die go to hell." He said, "Brother Miller, do you believe that?" When I was able to get my chin up from my collarbone and speak, I said, "Brother Nolan, you have known me for 40 years or more. You know I don't believe that. I've never said that." But this brother in that church said, "I was there at the Pleasant Valley church, he was teaching Romans and that's what he said." It was kind of like that lady that heard my story about the bulldozer.

Now, do I have your attention, everybody? I believe that infants who die go to heaven. I believe that and I'm going to give you three reasons why I believe it. 1. I want to believe it. 2. I have always heard it. 3. There is a class of Scriptures upon which we build our beliefs regarding this. "Suffer the little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of God." David said of his deceased infant, "He cannot return to me but I can go to where he is." Some have said infants who die are among the elect. That position is not without some difficulties. My friend preached a sermon wherein he used the analogy of the 20-year-olds and under during the wilderness wanderings, they were saved alive and he reckoned that to infants who died, but as much as I appreciate his willingness to address this particular subject, I concluded that what he actually did was to raise the age of accountability to 20.

What do we do with this question? Is that a valid question for people to ask? Of course it is and it's not one that we are willing or wanting to address very often. Do you know why? Because it touches every one of us in this room, either us personally, Glenda and I had a pregnancy that ended early, either us personally or someone in our family, someone close to us, and we don't want to be misunderstood and we want to be compassionate and we want to be pastoral in what we say and how we say it. But at the same time, those of us who are charged with the responsibility for preaching, and especially those of us who preach verse by verse, occasionally come to a text like our text in Romans 5.

I want you to listen to it. If you have it still open, look at verse 14, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Now the question arises: did infants die from the time of Adam to several hundred years later in the time of Moses and the law? Well, the obvious answer is: yes, some infants died during that time. Now the question is: why did they die? We all are agreed that physical death itself is the direct consequence of Adam's transgression. Infants did not sin against the command of God like Adam did. Infants did not sin against nature, against creation. They did not sin against their conscience, they are infants. And infants did not sin in this period of time against the law of Moses, the law had not been given yet. So we wrestle with these tough questions. Do you see it? Do you see how this causes us to tremble? How this causes us to be sober minded and we cannot escape the reality of it?

Now, what shall we do? I will ask you now to go with me in your mind's eye not to Mount Sinai that smoked and trembled, but go with me now to Mount Zion, to the city of God, to the new Jerusalem, and let's join our hearts and our voices with that innumerable host of angels and with the spirits of just men made whole. Let us gather now as the general assembly and church of the Firstborn and let us all lift our voices with those 24

elders and let us raise majestic praise as we sing the new song, the song of the Lamb, the song of the redeemed. Are you there in your mind? Now, you look around. What if, I'm not saying this is the case, I pray to the dear Lord it is not the case, but what if as you look around there are no infants there? Is anyone in this room going to interrupt that glorious occasion and charge God with unrighteousness? Not a one. We make our appeal to the mercy and the grace of our God.

Now what did I say upfront? I believe that infants who die go to heaven. Nod your head up and down like this. Now put that aside. I don't know how long I've been talking but y'all are still here. Some of you are thinking, "Not for long."

But let me speak briefly regarding this fifth item: Adam as the figurative man. Look at verse 14 again, the last statement, "who is," speaking of Adam, "who is the figure of him that was to come." In many places in the Scriptures, there is this contrast between Adam, the first man, the federal head of men, and Jesus, the last Adam, and I am pleased to tell you that in the sovereign heart and mind of God, just as he chose to condemn all men in Adam because of the obedience, because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, God has chosen to represent you and me, the elect of God, in Jesus Christ. What he did was imputed unto us. When he propitiated the justice of God, God was satisfied and you and I were delivered from the guilt and the wrath upon sin. He is our head. His obedience was our obedience, obedience to the moral law of God which because of our corruption we could never fulfill. Jesus fulfilled the demands of the law on our behalf. Hallelujah. But there was this matter of the curse of the law, and Jesus, though he had kept all of the law perfectly, he was made to be sin for us. God by imputation took our sins and placed them on Jesus as our sin bearer, and when he became sin for us, God poured out his wrath that should have been on us upon his Son. Hallelujah. What a Savior. Free from the law, oh happy condition/ Jesus hath bled and there is remission.

Let's bow and pray.

Our Father, we are grateful that you have chosen us in Christ, not based upon anything in us for we were all sinners to the core of our nature, but according to the pleasure of your own will you sent your Son to be our substitute. We praise your name. Amen.