

The Portrait of Christ as the Second Adam

What's the purpose of the Old Testament for a Christian? Is it just optional historical reading that kind of sets the stage for the real, more important story about Jesus in the New Testament? Or can Jesus be found in the Old Testament too?

On the very day Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to two disciples who were walking to a town named Emmaus. Remember this story? The two disciples were not part of Jesus' inner circle of The Twelve, but they were devoted followers. And Luke says that, as these two guys were talking about all that had happened on that horrible weekend in Jerusalem, Jesus Himself suddenly appeared. But these two disciples didn't recognize Him. So, Jesus asked them what they were talking about and they described the unjust trial, the crucifixion, and even the rumors of His resurrection. They were still obviously distraught. So, they said to Jesus:

“But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.” (Lk. 24:21)

Then Jesus says to them: (Lk. 24:25, 26)

... “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

Now, get this. What does Jesus do next? He takes them on a biblical journey. Where do they go?

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Lk. 24:27)

When Luke says, “Moses,” he means the first five books of the Bible that were written by Moses. When he says “the Prophets,” he's talking about all the major and minor books of the Old Testament that carry the name of a prophet. And when he says “all the Scriptures,” he's referring to every other book of the Old Testament. So, Jesus walked these two disciples through every book of the Old Testament showing them what? That they all had something to say about Himself!

Over the next eight weeks, we're going to walk on the Emmaus road. We're going to ask Jesus to show us what He showed Cleopas and his friend. We're going to catch a glimpse of these Portraits of Christ in the Old Testament and today we're going to begin where Jesus began, in the first book of Moses, Genesis. In chapter three we find what theologians call the *proto-evangelium*, the first preaching of the gospel and the first prophecy of a coming Messiah. It is a:

I. Portrait of Christ as the Second Adam

Let me begin by sharing a framework I discovered this week at pastor John Piper's website *Desiring God*, that I think simply explains what I mean by the term, “portraits of Christ.” Throughout the Old Testament, we see Jesus in three ways. We see Christ Patterned, Christ Promised and Christ Present.

We see Christ Patterned in real historic stories that match the Gospel story. That's what we'll see today. Paul says that Jesus came as a second Adam to undo the damage brought about by the first Adam. That's just one way we'll see Christ in the Old Testament.

A second way is by seeing Christ Promised through prophecies of His coming. We just celebrated Christmas and as part of that, most Christians reread so many of the prophecies that

prophesied the specific details of Christmas – where He would be born, the virgin birth, His humble surroundings, etc. And there are hundreds more prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus’ life. This is a second way we see Him in the Old Testament.

But there’s also a third set of portraits in the Old Testament. They are portraits of His Presence. Yes, the actual non-physical Presence of Jesus in some of the events on earth in the Old Testament. Patterned, Promised and Presence; this is what Jesus will show us on this road to Emmaus. Are you ready? Here we go! First, we see that God warned Satan that...

II. A Second Adam Would Come

The first Adam had a confrontation with Satan. What was the nature of that confrontation? First of all, let’s identify the combatants. Who are Adam and Eve? They are created beings. This is critical. They are part of a created order. They are not products of an anonymous process that happened by accident. No. They are creatures made by a Creator.

Also, they have authority over the entire created order. In Genesis one, we find Adam and Eve placed by the Creator at the top of His Creation. Only they are created “in the image” of the Creator Himself. The natural world is not equal with human beings. No, people are uniquely different. They are supernaturally endowed with traits not given to other parts of Creation. God said to people only:

... “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen. 1:28)

It goes on to say that their authority is also over every plant that grows, every living thing. Why is this important? Because this is why the enemy of God came to them. Satan came to challenge Adam and Eve because if he could get them to cave, the whole Creation would be affected.

And who is this Satan? Well, he is also a created being, but one who rebelled against his Creator so vehemently that he was removed from the Creator’s kingdom. And now he is allowed to come to God’s only image bearers on earth to make a challenge. And what is the nature of his challenge? Is he just messing with them and their plans for lunch? No. Satan is going for the jugular on his first visit. This wasn’t about eating one measly piece of fruit. It was an invitation to join a coup. Dr. Edmund Clowney describes Satan’s strategy:

Adam had been given dominion over the world by God: it was his legitimate calling. Yet Satan suggested that a greater dominion was possible, one in which the royalty of Adam and Eve would take on a different character, a glory they could barely imagine. They could become as God: not innocent little creatures put to digging in God’s walled-in garden, but mighty rivals to God Himself, having the knowledge that God Himself possesses of good and evil... Man could be his own god, build his own dominion, possess the world not as God’s steward but as an absolute monarch... By obeying the serpent, Adam and Eve made themselves the friends of Satan and the enemies of God.¹

This was the nature of Adam and Eve’s confrontation with Satan. Then, using the precious gift God gave them of freewill, they chose very poorly. Genesis 3 records the outcome. A curse descended upon not just Adam and Eve but upon the whole Creation, which they represented. Leadership is a very powerful thing. The decisions of a leadership team can bring great and awesome blessings on the kingdom they lead or it can bring great and awesome curses. Every human being in this world carries the authority assignment of Adam and Eve and because of their choice in the Garden, we all carry their curse. It’s not just the pain of childbirth for women and pain in producing a living wage for men. It’s the all-encompassing pain of the

consequences of sin. And the worst pain of all is this seemingly endless and all-powerful desire to sin, to do those things that are self-destructive and joy-killing. Adam and Eve lost their war with Satan. And as their seed, we lost, too.

Now, you might be thinking, “And where exactly do we see Jesus in all this?” Well, He’s here in Genesis, right in the middle of the mess. What we see is that...

III. Jesus Was and Is the Second Adam.

In Genesis 3:15, when God cursed Satan (Yes, Satan also got nicked pretty hard), He prophesied Satan’s final defeat through the coming of a descendant of the first Adam. Listen...

... “Because you have done this...

**I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”** (Gen. 3:14a, 15)

This is where we see Jesus. First, God says that the consequence for Satan’s tempting Adam and Eve to sin was that now there would be “enmity” between the woman’s offspring and Satan’s offspring. The word enmity implies “repeated attacks by both sides to injure the other.”²

Do you see anything to be encouraged about here? You might say, “Not really!” But I do! After God described the limitations Adam and Eve would have to deal with, He then pronounces a curse on Satan that includes more power for you and me as believers. God says, “All right, Satan, here’s your curse. You’re in for a battle now. Now the war begins and your biggest danger will be the offspring of this couple. My people are going to harass you and your hordes day and night. And besides that, one of those offspring one day is going to crush your head. (The Hebrew word here can mean more than just “bruise.” It can mean “to crush.”) So, watch yourself, Satan! Now, you’re in for a fight. I’m going to empower my people like you can’t believe.”

Do you understand that God expects you to push back at Satan? When he shoves you, you’re supposed to shove him back! Don’t sit there and take it! Don’t cower in fear of Him! You’re not helpless! God has armed you with spiritual weapons and armor to go to war against Satan! Read Ephesians 6. A. W. Tozer wrote a book entitled, *I Talk Back to the Devil*. In it he writes of how Satan tries to intimate us. He writes:

...are you still afraid of your past sins? God knows that sin is a terrible thing – and the devil knows it, too. So he follows us around and as long as we will permit it, he will taunt us about our past sins.

As for myself, I have learned to talk back to him on this score. I say, “Yes, Devil, sin is terrible – but I remind you that I got it from you! And I remind you, Devil, that everything good – forgiveness and cleansing and blessing – everything that is good I have freely received from Jesus Christ!”

Then Tozer quotes the words of A. B. Simpson’s hymn, “*I have Overcome*” which say...

*Fainting soldier of the Lord,
Hear His sweet, inspiring word;
“I have conquered all thy foes,
I have suffered all thy woes.
Struggling soldier, trust in Me,
I have overcome for thee!”*

*Fear not though thy foes be strong,
Faint not though the strife be long;*

*Trust thy glorious Captian's power,
Watch with Him one little hour.
Hear Him calling, "Follow Me,
I have overcome for thee!*

Do you see Jesus in Gen. 3:15? He's right there! He's the offspring of Eve traced for us by Luke's genealogy all the way back to Adam. He's the offspring who was being prophesied to come and crush Satan's head. But why would this be necessary? That's the question the apostle Paul answers in Romans 5. Paul states clearly how sin entered the world:

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned ... (Rom. 5:12)

This is our dilemma, our spiritual disease, our curse. Sin is our disease and it kills. But it is such a critical dilemma that God chose to resolve it as only He could. Listen to Paul's explanation as translated in The Message:

... if one man's sin put crowds of people at the dead-end abyss of separation from God, just think what God's gift poured through one man, Jesus Christ, will do! There's no comparison between that death-dealing sin and this generous, life-giving gift. The verdict on that one sin was the death sentence; the verdict on the many sins that followed was this wonderful life sentence. If death got the upper hand through one man's wrongdoing, can you imagine the breathtaking recovery life makes, sovereign life, in those who grasp with both hands this wildly extravagant life-gift, this grand setting-everything-right, that the one man Jesus Christ provides?

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Here it is in a nutshell: Just as one person did it wrong and got us in all this trouble with sin and death, another person did it right and got us out of it. But more than just getting us out of trouble, he got us into life! One man said no to God and put many people in the wrong; one man said yes to God and put many in the right. ²⁰⁻²¹ All that passing laws against sin did was produce more lawbreakers. But sin didn't, and doesn't, have a chance in competition with the aggressive forgiveness we call grace. When it's sin versus grace, grace wins hands down. All sin can do is threaten us with death, and that's the end of it. Grace, because God is putting everything together again through the Messiah, invites us into life—a life that goes on and on and on, world without end. (Rom. 5:16-21)

This portrait of Jesus in the promise of Father God to send a warrior to defeat Satan isn't the first portrait of Jesus in the Bible. No, Jesus is also clearly seen in the plural pronouns God uses for Himself just before He created Adam. He said in Gen. 1:26:

... "Let US make man (Hebrew word *adam*) in OUR image, after OUR likeness. ..."

Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity. He is present in the "us" and "our" of creation, as well as the prophecy of God the Father that an 'offspring' would come through Eve to set things right between us and God.

So, how are you dealing with your sin, your bad choices? Joni Mitchell in her anthem for the Woodstock generation sang...

*We are stardust, billion-year-old carbon,
We are golden, caught in the devil's bargain,
And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden.*

Friends, that is precisely the one thing we cannot do. There is no reverse on this vehicle called life. No, there is no hope of ever going back and undoing Adam and Eve's horrible choice

nor is there any chance of undoing your own horrible choices. You and I have zero power to “*get ourselves back to the garden*” of innocence.

But there is a power that exists outside of the boundaries of this world, outside of time, and beyond our inability to change the past. It is the power of the Second Adam, Jesus Christ.

For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace... reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:17)

Which man are you counting on to fix your horrible choices? If you’ve tried fixing them yourself and have gotten less than acceptable results, there is another way. Jesus has done the work necessary for you to be forgiven. If you acknowledge your need, He’ll supply the fix. And if you’ve already received His gift of new life, but you’re bound up in regret and remorse over your sin, remember this: *it’s not the enormity of your sin, but the enormity of His sacrifice that we must focus on.* You have authority to silence the devil’s accusations. When he tries to intimidate you, give him this command:

In the name of Jesus, you have no power over me. By the blood of Jesus, I command you to get lost!

And he must obey. And he will obey because the blood of Jesus, the Second Adam, will reverse the curse. Let’s pray...

¹ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2013), pp. 32-33

² Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 1* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), p. 80