

## Second Adam From Above

**John 1:1** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

<sup>4</sup> *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.<sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

<sup>6</sup> *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. <sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

<sup>10</sup> *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

<sup>14</sup> *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn. 1:1-14)*

This is the year 2017, but perhaps we are so used to using the date in our correspondence and business, that we don't often stop to ask ourselves, 2017 years since what? What event marks the beginning of counting 2017?

We all know the answer, that 2017 is A.D. 2017, Anno Domini – the year of our Lord 2017. A.D. 1 is supposed to mark the birth of Christ, and this is the 2017<sup>th</sup> year of our Lord. But as we know, we work with two sets of dates B.C. (before Christ), and A.D. (year of our Lord).

Now we might be used to that. But when you consider that most civilisations have had one set of dates, ours is rather remarkable. Most cultures have tried to calculate the date of creation, and then numbered the years since then, or since the founding of their religion. Judaism puts that date of creation at 3761 B.C. on our calendar, but since Judaism does not recognise the birth of Christ as significant, in Judaism this is the year 5776. In Islam, this is the year 1484. In China, it is the year 4714. In Buddhism, it is the year 2557.

What we have is a negative calendar, a calendar that counts down, till we reach 1 B.C., and the next year is A.D. 1 – Anno Domini 1. The pivotal event, the dividing moment between the countdown and the count up is the birth of Christ.

Now on the one hand, it is quite normal for Christians to have wanted to date things from the birth of Christ. But on the other hand, it is the providence of God that what we now have on our hands is two starting dates. We have the starting creation, which is a countdown, and then we have a second date, from the birth of Christ which is a count up. In many ways then, Christmas is like a second creation.

Nowhere is that clearer than in the opening chapter of the Gospel of John. What we have in the first chapter is John alerting us to the fact that the birth of Christ was a kind of second creation. John decided to explain the birth of Christ in very different way to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John already had the other 3 Gospels in hand, so instead of repeating what they wrote, he filled in what they didn't. Instead of repeating the angelic appearances to Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds, the stories of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the magi from the East, the birth in a stable, John wants us to think about the birth of Christ as an event parallel to the six-day Creation of Genesis 1.

In fact, he wants us to unmistakably link Genesis chapter 1 to John chapter 1. For example, the opening words of John 1:1 are the same as the opening words of Genesis 1:1. In the beginning.

Verse 3 shows us John is thinking about the Creator and creation. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made (Jn. 1:3)

Then, in verse 4-5, we have this Word connected to light: <sup>4</sup> *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.* <sup>5</sup> *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.* (Jn. 1:4-5)

And of course, in Genesis 1, the first thing God says on day 1 – <sup>3</sup> *Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.* <sup>4</sup> *And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.* (Gen. 1:3-4)

In the first creation, light is separated from darkness, and now in the second creation, light is separated from darkness.

In verses 6-9, we have two lights.

<sup>6</sup> *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.* <sup>7</sup> *This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.* <sup>8</sup> *He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.* <sup>9</sup> *That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.* (Jn. 1:6-9)

In Genesis 1 we have two lights.

<sup>16</sup> *Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.* (Gen. 1:16)

John wants us to feel the echo of Genesis 1 as we read John 1. The mention of creation, the separation of light from darkness is all meant to make us think we are looking at a second creation story.

But what was created at Christmas? Where John really wants to get us is to is verse 14. Because verse 14 is where all this build-up really culminates. The Word, the Creator, the Light, became flesh, He became man. In other words, there was a second sixth day, and there was a second Adam created.

From the creation of the first Adam to this event is B.C. And everything after it is A.D, from the creation of the second Adam. But that is of more significance than merely how we date the years. Instead, the Bible teaches that everyone is either someone who belongs to the old creation, or someone who belongs to the new creation. You are either someone who belongs to the race of the first Adam, or someone who belongs to the race of the second Adam. You are today either still a B.C. person, or an A.D. person. And whichever one you are will determine your ultimate destiny. You will inherit the inheritance of whichever Adam you are in.

So what we must do with this passage is understand the differences between the two Adams. On this Christmas day, we must understand the contrast between the first creation, and the second, which began at Christmas just over 2000 years ago. As we study John alongside the Genesis account, we'll consider three contrasts between the first and second Adam.

## **I. The First Adam Was A Life-Given Creature, The Second Adam is Life-Giving Creator**

<sup>7</sup> *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.* (Gen. 2:7)

It's interesting that God didn't make man out of a living plant, or from water filled with microbes. He chose dust. Dust is one of the 'deadest' things in the universe. The Moon has plenty of dust. Planets like Mars have plenty of dust, but not a shred of life. God took this lifeless substance – dust

– and to make a point of it, breathed into it. God imparts His life into man, and this dust wakes up to become a *nephesh*, a soul, a living being embodied in Earthly glory. Man is the last creature made, and the highest.

I had a professor who pronounced the word creature in an odd, but deliberate way. He pronounced it “create-*ture*”. But I believe he did that because he wanted us to think about the meaning of the word creature – a creature is a created being, something whose life came entirely from another. That is the nature of the first Adam. He was a creature, who was given life.

But John wants us to know that the Second Adam was not merely part of creation. The Second Adam, the one who was made flesh according to verse 14, was very different.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.*

The second Adam according to this verse was eternal. When John says *in the beginning was the Word*, he does not use a word in the original which means in the beginning the Word came about or began to be. He uses the imperfect tense which means, in the beginning, the Word was existing. We are time-space creatures, and we can no more understand timelessness any more than we can picture spacelessness. But the Bible is telling us that when time as we would think of it began, the Word, the second Adam was already there.

And the next two phrases tell us why. He was with God, and He was God. The Word was from all eternity, existing with all the properties, attributes and essence of God. He was fully and completely God. But in a second sense, He was alongside God, He was facing towards God. Here we have the truth that God is One being with a plurality of persons, Father, Son, and later in the chapter (v32-33), Spirit. Eternity, deity and one of a Trinity.

And if there is any doubt in our minds that the Word is not a creature, verse 3 puts it straight: <sup>3</sup> *All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (Jn. 1:1-3)*

Everything created was made through the agency of His hands. No particle in the universe came about except through the direct agency of the Word. The Latin term is *ex nihilo* – out of nothing. The Word made everything out of nothing. The Word who became flesh, the second Adam, was eternal, the Son of God, fully God, the Creator.

How comes He soft and weak  
With such a tender cheek,  
With such a soft, small hand?--  
The very Hand which spann'd  
Heaven when its girth was plann'd.

How comes He with a voice  
Which is but baby-noise?--  
That Voice which spake with might:  
'Let there be light!' and light  
Sprang out before our sight.

Now He takes it further.

<sup>4</sup> *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (Jn. 1:4-5) <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. (Jn. 1:9)*

Whereas the first Adam was given life, within the second Adam was life. He had life in Himself. His existence was not contingent on another. He was self-existent. In theology we call this aseity – life which is self-generated, self-sufficient. The Uncreated Creator, the ground of all being, the I AM.

This Word, with the attributes of eternity, deity, trinity, creativity, aseity, this Word did something marvelous in verse 14. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. What does that mean? It means that 2016 years ago, an act of creation occurred in the womb of a young virgin. A human being was conceived by creating *ex nihilo* in her womb what was needed to fertilise a human ovum, and simultaneous to that moment of life beginning in her womb, the Word joined Himself to that human nature.

It is not that there was a separate human person in Mary's womb that He came to possess. Nor is it that there was simply an organic mass of human tissue that the Word was going to animate. No, a human was conceived in Mary's womb, inseparably united with God the Son. The Person who would be born was a Person with two complete natures; a divine nature and a human nature. The first Adam was animated by the breath of God giving Him life. The second Adam was the life-giving Creator who added to Himself a true human nature. Growing in the womb of Mary was a true human, a man, an *adam*, also made of dust, but now united with the self-existent, divine, eternal, creating Son of God.

<sup>45</sup> And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

<sup>46</sup> However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.

Christmas celebrates the birth of the Second Adam who was infinitely greater than the first, for he is a union of God and man, Creator and Creature. But it is a celebration for a second reason, a second contrast between the first and second.

## **II. The First Adam Was a Failed Image-Bearer, the Second Adam is the Perfect Image of God**

The creation week in Genesis really culminates on day six with the creation of Adam.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen. 1:26-28)

After God has made everything, God now delegates the rulership and stewardship of it all to Man. Man is the only creature who is made in God's image, and as God's image-bearer, Adam will be God's vice-regent in the world, God's mediatorial king. Adam and Eve were to fill the Earth with children, who would, as a race under God order the whole world for God's glory, expand Eden from a territory to encompassing the globe. Adam and Eve could have reflected God's wisdom, love, goodness, creativity, reason as they cultivated the whole world.

They had one test. It was a perfect test for whether they could rule the world for God's glory. The test was simple: whether they would continue to trust God for the knowledge of what was good, and live by faith in Him, or whether they would seek an independent knowledge of good and evil, not so much reflectors of God, but gods in their own right, *elohim* with their own authority.

The first Adam failed. Instead of being a successful image-bearer, he chose sin, and so became a distortion of the image of God. Adam's descendants would now be creatures endowed with God's

image, but now perverting those powers of love, and reason, and imagination, and affection into a horrible parody of God. Those closest to God do the greatest damage by their fall, and Adam, with all his powers and abilities fell into deep ruin.

But what does John tell us about the second Adam?

*<sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (Jn. 1:18)*

The one and only Son, the eternally begotten Son, who has always dwelt in deepest union with the Father, He has declared Him. The word for *declared* means to bring out the meaning, to explain, to reveal. Before the second Adam came, no one had seen the essence of God ever, nor could anyone see Him and live. But when the Word became flesh, we now had before us a human form of our Creator. The second Adam put a face on God, a voice, an accent on God's voice. John was so flabbergasted by this that when he began his epistle he said *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- (1 Jn. 1:1)*

And He did it as a true man. Spurgeon said “Our Lord Jesus Christ is, in some senses, more completely man than Adam ever was. Adam was not born; he was created as a man. Adam never had to struggle through the risks and weaknesses of infancy; he knew not the littlenesses of childhood,—he was full-grown at once. Father Adam could not sympathize with me as a babe and a child. But how man-like is Jesus! He does not begin with us in mid-life, as Adam did; but He is cradled with us, He accompanies us in the pains, and feebleness, and infirmities of infancy, and He continues with us even to the grave.”

So when the second Adam, how well did He image forth God?

*<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn. 1:14)*

We beheld His beauty, God's beauty, full of grace, full of truth. So true a reflection of the Father was He, that He could say to Philip, He who has seen Me has seen the Father; (Jn. 14:9) Several times in Scripture, Jesus is called the image of God.

**2Co 4:4** *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

**Col 1:15** *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

*who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Heb. 1:3)<sup>3</sup>*

No one ever imaged forth God better than Christ, because He was the God-Man. But was the second Adam put to the test, like the first Adam was?

The second Adam was also tempted by Satan, tempted to strike out for independent life, glory independent of His Father. But where the first Adam failed, the second Adam prevailed. He answered Satan with Scripture, overcame him with faith, defeated him with humble submission.

The first Adam failed in a garden. The second Adam won in a garden, when He said to the Father, “Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done.” And the way we know that He perfectly imaged the Father was the event of the Resurrection. Because had the second Adam failed in even the

minutest detail, then like the first Adam, His death would have been the curse for His own sin. But when the Father raised Him, it was vindication that the second Adam was the successful image-bearer all through His life. At Christmas time, we remember the birth of the second Adam who did not fall, who perfectly imaged God.

So this then leads us to what the two Adams bring to their respective races. Adam's failure brought one set of consequences to His race, the second Adam's success brought another set to His race.

### **III. The First Adam Brought Death and Judgement, The Second Adam Brings Life and Grace**

God warned Adam and Eve of what would happen if they disobeyed Him.

*<sup>17</sup> "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. 2:17)*

Now in our democratic, individualised age, it is hard for us to understand how one man and his actions could represent a whole group of people. But the Bible teaches us that not only did Adam represent us, but in that moment, the entire race was contained in Adam. Today the race is 7 billion people, but on that day, the race was two, and even the second had come from the first. Adam was the race, and of all humans, the best positioned to take the test of temptation. He was innocent, he was unfallen, his body was uncursed, he was far more intelligent than we. But with all that, he sinned, and with that sin, he, and the whole race in him, fell into spiritual death.

*<sup>2</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned-- (Rom. 5:12)*

Every one born once, comes into the world in the race of Adam, and so fall under the curse of Adam.

But the second Adam did not sin. Not only did He not sin, but He died as a substitute for all others, taking their penalty on His innocent self. John tells us He was full of grace and truth. *<sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (Jn. 1:17)* And so He, the second Adam can bring life. The first Adam was head of his race, so all in him must suffer his fate. The Second Adam is head of His race, so all in Him, have His life.

*<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. <sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. (Rom. 5:18-19)*

But now here is the dilemma. How can we, sons and daughters of the first Adam, join the race of the second Adam?

*<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (Jn. 1:12-13)*

John tells us that if you receive Christ, that is, you believe He is the God-Man who died for your sins and rose again, you receive Him as your Saviour and Lord, then God does a miracle of birth, a creation-work. This work makes you a child of God, not through human willpower, or human good works, or anything of that nature. Faith in Christ gives you the right to be called a child of God, because at that moment, God creates in you a new nature, after the nature of the second Adam.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Eph 2:10

and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:24)

<sup>10</sup> and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, (Col. 3:10)

If you do this, then you have the inheritance of the second Adam. And what an inheritance it is.

<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. (1 Cor. 15:22-25)

<sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. <sup>50</sup> Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. <sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Cor. 15:45-52)

What is the inheritance of the second Adam? A resurrected body, reigning over a resurrected Earth. The second Adam will rule the world in righteousness, and the glory of the Lord will cover the Earth as the waters cover the sea. And everyone in the second Adam will have a deathless body, glorifying God in a world without the curse. In so many ways, Christmas is when God re-writes Genesis 1, 2, and 3. It is a do-over, and this time, the second Adam

This is why Isaac Watts wrote:

Where He displays His healing power  
Death and the curse are known no more;  
In Him the tribes of Adam boast  
More blessings than their father lost.

Every one of us starts life in a B.C. time. It's our before Christ time in life. We copy the first Adam. And we die, even as we live – a living death. Celebrating Christmas before you are saved is then the ultimate contradiction: celebrating the birth of the second Adam, while you remain committed to the first Adam, celebrating the second creation, while you are loyal to the first.

But as many as receive Him, there is an A.D. Christmas becomes to us, the celebration of the greater sixth day, when the second Adam was formed in the womb of Mary, united with the eternal Son of God, who “left his Father's throne above (so free, so infinite his grace!), emptied himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race.”

Has there been an A.D. In your life? Has God said “let there be light” in your soul? Have you been born from above, united with the God-Man, become a new creation? That's when you can sing  
“Adam's likeness now efface,  
Stamp Thine image in its place:  
Second Adam from above,  
Reinstate us in Thy love.”