



Adam
The Handiwork Of God

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Overview

ADAM, USED OF GOD, FALLS INTO DISOBEDIENCE

We can hardly imagine what it must have been like to be the first and only person on earth. It's one thing for us to be lonely; it was another for Adam, who had never known another human being. He missed much that makes us who we are—he had no childhood, no parents, no family or friends.

He had to learn to be human on his own. Fortunately, God didn't let him struggle too long before presenting him with an ideal companion and mate, Eve.

Theirs was a complete, innocent, and open oneness, without a hint of shame. One of Adam's first conversations with his delightful new companion must have been about the rules of the garden.

Before God made Eve he had already given Adam complete freedom in the garden, with the responsibility to tend and care for it. But one tree was off limits, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam would have told Eve all about this. She knew, when Satan approached her that the tree's fruit was not to be eaten. However, she decided to eat the forbidden fruit.

Then she offered some to Adam. At that moment, the fate of creation was on the line.

Sadly, Adam didn't pause to consider the consequences.

He went ahead and ate. In that moment of small rebellion something large, beautiful, and free was shattered. . . God's perfect creation. Man was separated from God by his desire to act on his own.

The effect on a plate glass window is the same whether a pebble or a boulder is hurled at it—the thousands of fragments can never be regathered.

In the case of man's sin, however, God already had a plan in motion to overcome the effects of the rebellion.

Formation of the first man

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals."

So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals."

Why does God use the plural form, "Let *us* make man in *our* image"? One view says this is a reference to the Trinity—God the Father, Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit—all of whom are God.

Another view is that the plural wording is used to denote majesty. Kings traditionally use the plural form in speaking of themselves. From Job 33:4 and Psalm 104:30, we do know that God's Spirit was present in the creation. From Col. 1:16 we know that Christ, God's Son, was at work in the creation.

In what ways are we made in God's image? God obviously did not create us exactly like himself because God has no physical body. Instead, we are reflections of God's glory. Some feel that our reason, creativity, speech, or self-determination is the image of God. More likely, it is our entire self that reflects the image of God.

We will never be totally like God because he is our supreme Creator. But we do have the ability to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Knowing that we are made in God's image and thus share many of his characteristics provides a solid basis for self-worth. Human worth is not based on possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or public acclaim. Instead it is based on being made in God's image. Because we bear God's image, we can feel positive about ourselves. Criticizing or downgrading ourselves is criticizing what God has made and the abilities he has given us. Knowing that you are a person of

worth helps you love God, know him personally, and make a valuable contribution to those around you.

God made both man and woman in his image. Neither man nor woman is made more in the image of God than the other. From the beginning the Bible places both man and woman at the pinnacle of God's creation. Neither sex is exalted, and neither is depreciated.

To "rule over" something is to have absolute authority and control over it. God has ultimate rule over the earth, and he exercises his authority with loving care. When God delegated some of his authority to the human race, he expected us to take responsibility for the environment and the other creatures that share our planet. We must not be careless and wasteful as we fulfill this charge. God was careful how he made this earth. We must not be careless about how we take care of it.

Man was created from the dust of the earth.

Genesis 2:7

And the Lord God formed a man's body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person.

"From the dust of the ground" implies that there is nothing fancy about the chemical elements making up our bodies. The body is a lifeless shell until God brings it alive with his "breath of life."

When God removes his life-giving breath, our bodies once again return to dust. Therefore our life and worth come from God's Spirit. Many boast of their achievements and abilities as though they were the originator of their own strengths. Others feel worthless because their abilities do not stand out. In reality,

our worth comes not from our achievements but from the God of the universe, who chooses to give us the mysterious and miraculous gift of life. Value life, as he does.

Adam became a living person

1 Cor. 15:45

The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit.

The "last Adam" refers to Christ. Because Christ rose from the dead, he is a life-giving spirit. This means that he entered into a new form of existence (see the note on +2 Cor. 3:17). He is the source of the spiritual life that will result in our resurrection. Christ's new glorified human body now suits his new glorified life—just as Adam's human body was suitable to his natural life. When we are resurrected, God will give us a transformed, eternal body suited to our new eternal life.

God gives Adam warnings.

Genesis 2:16-25

But the Lord God gave him this warning: "You may freely eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die."

And the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him." [So the Lord God formed from the soil every kind of animal and bird. He brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, and Adam chose a name for each one.]

He gave names to all the livestock, birds, and wild animals. But still there was no companion suitable for him. So the Lord God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the place from which he had taken it.

Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam.

"At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of a man."

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now, although Adam and his wife were both naked, neither of them felt any shame.

Man's sins cannot be hidden from God

Job 31:33

Have I tried to hide my sins as people normally do, hiding my guilt in a closet?

Although baffled by the reasons for his suffering, Job affirmed God's superior understanding by asking, "Can anyone teach knowledge to God?" The way you respond to your personal struggles shows your attitude toward God. Rather than becoming angry with God, continue to trust him, no matter what your circumstances may be.

Although it is sometimes difficult to see, God *is* in control. We must commit ourselves to him so we will not resent his timing.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 43:27

From the very beginning, your ancestors sinned against me—all your leaders broke my laws.

How tempting it is to remind someone of a past offense! But when God forgives our sins he totally forgets them. We never have to fear that he will remind us of them later. Because God forgives our sin, we need to forgive others.

Adam rebelled and broke God's covenant

Hosea 6:7

"But like Adam, you broke my covenant and rebelled against me.

One of Hosea's key themes is that Israel had broken the covenant God had made with them at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-20). God wanted to make Israel a blessing and a light to all the nations (Genesis 12:2-3; Isaiah 49:6); and if God's chosen people obeyed him and proclaimed him to the world, he would give them special blessings.

If they broke the covenant, however, they would suffer severe penalties, as they should have known (see Deut. 28:15-68). Sadly, the people broke the agreement and proved themselves unfaithful to God. How about you? Have you also broken faith with God? What about your forgotten promises to serve him?

God has given the generous gift of Forgiveness.

Romans 5:14-21

They all died anyway—even though they did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. What a contrast between Adam and Christ, who was yet to come!

And what a difference between our sin and God's generous gift of forgiveness. For this one man, Adam, brought death too many through his sin. But this other man, Jesus Christ, brought forgiveness to many through God's bountiful gift.

And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but we have the free gift of being accepted by God, even though we are guilty of many sins.

The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over us, but all who receive God's wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

Yes, Adam's one sin brought condemnation upon everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness makes all people right in God's sight and gives them life. [19] Because one person disobeyed God, many people became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many people will be made right in God's sight.

God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful kindness became more abundant.

So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful kindness rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Adam is a *pattern*; he is the counterpart of Christ. Just as Adam was a representative of created humanity, so is Christ the representative of a new spiritual humanity.

We were all born into Adam's physical family—the family line that leads to certain death. All of us have reaped the results of Adam's sin.

We have inherited his guilt, a sinful nature (the tendency to sin), and God's punishment. Because of Jesus, however, we can trade judgment for forgiveness.

We can trade our sin for Jesus' righteousness. Christ offers us the opportunity to be born into his spiritual family—the family line that begins with forgiveness and leads to eternal life. If we do nothing, we have death through Adam; but if we come to God by faith, we have life through Christ. Which family line do you now belong to?

What a promise this is to those who love Christ! We can reign over sin's power, over death's threats, and over Satan's attacks. Eternal life is ours now and forever. In the power and protection of Jesus Christ, we can overcome temptation. See Romans 8:17 for more on our privileged position in Christ.

As a sinner, separated from God, you see his law from below, as a ladder to be climbed to get to God. Perhaps you have repeatedly tried to climb it, only to fall to the ground every time you have advanced one or two rungs.

Or perhaps the sheer height of the ladder seems so overwhelming that you have never even started up. In either case, what relief you should feel to see Jesus offering with open arms to lift you above the ladder of the law, to take you directly to God!

Once Jesus lifts you into God's presence, you are free to obey—out of love, not necessity, and through God's power, not your own. You know that if you stumble, you will not fall back to the ground. Instead, you will be caught and held in Christ's loving arms.

Subsequent history of Adam

Genesis 3:20-24

Then Adam named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all people everywhere. And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

Then the Lord God said, "The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever!"

So the Lord God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

After banishing them from the garden, the Lord God stationed mighty angelic beings to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life.

Life in the Garden of Eden was like living in heaven. Everything was perfect, and if Adam and Eve had obeyed God, they could have lived there forever.

But after disobeying, Adam and Eve no longer deserved paradise, and God told them to leave. If they had continued to live in the garden and eat from the tree of life, they would have lived forever.

But eternal life in a state of sin would mean forever trying to hide from God. Like Adam and Eve, all of us have sinned and are separated from fellowship with God.

We do not have to stay separated, however. God is preparing a new earth as an eternal paradise for his people (see Rev. 22).

The cherubim were mighty angels of the Lord.

This is how Adam and Eve broke their relationship with God: (1) they became convinced their way was better than God's; (2) they became self-conscious and hid; (3) they tried to excuse and defend themselves. To build a relationship with God we must reverse those steps: (1) we must drop our excuses and self-defenses; (2) we must stop trying to hide from God; (3) we must become convinced that God's way is better than our way.\

Adam and Eve have children.

Genesis 4:1-2

Now Adam slept with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When the time came, she gave birth to Cain, and she said, "With the Lord's help, I have brought forth a man!" Later she gave birth to a second son and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain was a farmer.

The phrase lay with is literally he knew and means he "had sexual intercourse with." Sexual union means oneness and total knowledge of the other person. Sexual intercourse is the most intimate of acts, sealing a social, physical, and spiritual relationship. That is why God has reserved it for marriage alone.

No longer was everything provided for Adam and Eve as it was in the Garden of Eden, where their daily tasks were refreshing and delightful. Now they had to struggle against the elements in order to provide food, clothing, and shelter for themselves and their family. Cain became a farmer, while Abel was a shepherd. In parts of the Middle East today, these ancient occupations are still practiced much as they were in Cain and Abel's time.

Seth is born to replace Abel

Genesis 4:25

Adam slept with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth, for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, the one Cain killed."

Unfortunately, when left to themselves, people tend to get worse instead of better. This short summary of Lamech's family shows us the variety of talent and ability God gives humans. It also presents the continuous development of sin as time passes. Another killing occurred, presumably in self-defense.

Violence is on the rise. Two distinct groups are appearing: (1) those who show indifference to sin and evil, and those who call on the name of the Lord (the descendants of Seth, Genesis 4:26). Seth would take Abel's place as leader of a line of God's faithful people.

Genesis 5:1

This is the history of the descendants of Adam. When God created people, he made them in the likeness of God.

The Bible contains several lists of ancestors, called *genealogies*. There are two basic views concerning these lists:

- (1) They are complete, recording the entire history of a family, tribe, or nation; or
- (2) They are not intended to be exhaustive and may include only famous people or the heads of families. "Became the father of" could also mean "was the ancestor of."

Why are genealogies included in the Bible? The Hebrews passed on their beliefs through oral tradition. For many years in many places, writing was primitive or nonexistent. Stories were told to children who passed them on to their children. Genealogies gave a skeletal outline that helped people remember the stories.

For centuries these genealogies were added to and passed down from family to family. Even more important than preserving family tradition, genealogies were

included to confirm the Bible's promise that the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be born into the line of Abraham.

Genealogies point out an interesting characteristic of God. People are important to him as individuals, not just as races or nations. Therefore God refers to people by name, mentioning their life span and descendants. The next time you feel overwhelmed in a vast crowd, remember that the focus of God's attention and love is on the individual—and on you!

The death of Adam.

Genesis 5:5

Adam died at the age of 930.

All human beings are related, going back to Adam and Eve. Mankind is a family that shares one flesh and blood. Remember this when prejudice enters your mind or hatred invades your feelings. Each person is a valuable and unique creation of God.

Since a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, some consider that Adam died before one thousand years had expired.

Life Application

The entire Bible is the story of how God's plan unfolds, ultimately leading to God's own visit to earth through his Son, Jesus.

His sinless life and death made it possible for God to offer forgiveness to all who want it.

Our small and large acts of rebellion prove that we are descendants of Adam. Only by asking forgiveness of Jesus Christ can we become children of God.

Key Verse:

“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation,

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print