

Jesus: The New Adam

Jesus is the New Adam. Jesus is the uncreated Son of God, while Adam is the created son of God through the covenant God established with him. In this Bible Study, we want to explore how Jesus, the Son, acts versus how Adam, the son, acts. And, we want to look at how they act in relation to God, other people, and the created world. In each case, the point is simple: Jesus shows us what it means to live perfectly as a child of God — He shows us how we are to act in order to remain close to God. Jesus does what Adam fails to do, and undoes what Adam manages to do wrongly! Please work through this Bible study together.

The Relationship with the Father

Jesus is obedient. To be obedient means "to obey." When one obeys, one listens to, and responds to one who is in authority. Now, the word "authority" has the word "author" as its root. We often take this to mean someone who writes a book. But, originally, the word "author" literally meant "one who helps me to grow." So, an authority figure is one who exists to help us grow. If one trusts the authority figure, then one entrusts him or herself to the figure through obedience. That is, by listening to and doing what the authority says, the person will grow. Obedience—an act of entrusting oneself to the care of another—is the pathway to growth under the care of an authority figure.

Read Gen. 2:15-17 and then read Gen. 3:1-6. What happens here?

Next, take a look at how the New Adam handles a similar situation. Read Matt. 26:36-39. Does Jesus do God's will? How do you know?

Romans 5:19 says: "For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous." Obedience is a big deal. Because we're baptized into Christ, the obedient one, who are we to obey? Why? Can you think of anyone else you should obey? Why?

The Relationship with Others

Please read Gen. 2:21-23. Where does the woman come from?

Why does the woman come from the man's side? Do you recall the significance of this from last year's material?

In Gen. 2:24, we see that Adam and Eve become one flesh, they enter into a covenant bond or relationship called marriage. In Gen. 2:15, we read that Adam is to take care of the garden and to "guard" it. This certainly refers to the garden of Eden, but it also refers to Eve. Does Adam take care of and "guard" Eve? How do you know?

Please read John 19:31-34. What comes from Jesus' side as he "sleeps" on the Cross?

These elements signify the Church — and the sacraments that bring about the life of the Church. Ancient peoples understood blood as containing the life of the person. Spilling blood, or losing blood, or blood no longer moving about the body meant the person had died. Water signifies both death (think about a frightening image of the ocean during a storm) and new life (here, think about rain in the springtime). In the life of the Church, Christ's blood refers to the Eucharist and water to Baptism. So, who is actually coming from Christ's side?

Now, the Church is Christ's bride, like Eve was Adam's. Check out Ephesians 5:25-27. And, in case this isn't clear enough, read verse 32! Read Ephesians 5:26-27 again. How does the Son act toward the Church? What does the Son do for the Church?

How does this differ from how Adam ends up caring for Eve?

How do Jesus' actions toward us (members of the Church) help us to see how we are to act toward others?

The Relationship with the Created World

Take a quick look at Genesis 2:15. What is the man supposed to do in the garden of Eden?

This is interesting. Adam is supposed to work, which is not a punishment for sin — because he hasn't sinned yet. The first sin is recorded in Gen. 3.

If work is not a punishment and it is given to human beings by God, it means that, fundamentally, work is good and it is good because human beings are the ones who do it. Now, the work God gives Adam is most literally translated "to keep and to guard." So, he's supposed to cultivate the soil, or till it, and guard the garden. Creation is a gift God entrusts to Adam's care. You have been given many gifts for which you are responsible as well. What are some of these? How should you take care of them? Do you? Discuss!

Now, Adam fails in his responsibility. He doesn't carry out the work that has been entrusted to him. What happens to Adam's relationship with creation as a result of his sin? (HINT: Read Gen. 3:17-19)

Read Revelation 21:5. What is Jesus, the Creator, going to do for our relationship with creation? Think about the life of Jesus, what do you think his "work" is? How does Jesus carry out his work/responsibilities? What can this teach us about how we should approach our responsibilities?

The Final Point

We have all been created by God in his "image and likeness," as sons or daughters, males or females, and this relationship with God is the source of our dignity (or worth). Living in this relationship means living all of our relationships well — our relationship with the rest of God's creation (that we care for the gifts he's given us), that we love one another, and that we recognize God's authority and live accordingly in order to grow and fully become the sons and daughters he created us to be.

