

The second Adam

Christ Church: 14th September 2025 10.00 am. and online
Romans 5:6-8,18-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 (Bibles – pages 1132,1157)

You could give me many titles or names for Jesus: the Christ, Emmanuel, Messiah, Lamb of God, Light of the world, Lord, Good Shepherd, Prince of peace, King, and so on. But today's theme is a title not so well-known: the 'second' or 'last Adam'.

The idea comes in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. If you are musical you might know this through Handel's *Messiah* (1741). One chorus has the words: For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21–22).

If you know Elgar's oratorio, *The dream of Gerontius*, it comes in Cardinal Newman's hymn (1865), *Praise to the holiest in the height*:

O loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame, a second Adam to the fight, and to the rescue came. O wisest love! That flesh and blood which did in Adam fail, should strive afresh against the foe, should strive and should prevail.

Last week we looked at the first Adam in Genesis 3 and what is known as the Fall, with sin entering the world. Jesus, born as a man, then comes as another type of Adam to rescue us from the condemnation that we deserve as sinners.

The idea of rescue is fundamental. It comes through the cross where Jesus took our sins in his body. But this is all played out on a huge stage in the history of the world and the whole Bible story.

Picture us as deformed carrots! We were created as perfect carrots but are now bent and definitely not as we should be. Through Jesus' death we can become perfect and straight again in God's sight and will have perfect, spiritual, resurrection bodies to come.

There are at least three different ideas for sin in Scripture. 'Sin' means falling short of God's standard. (Consider the demands of the two great commandments.) 'Transgression' means crossing the line that God has set. (Consider how Jesus made God's law more demanding.) 'Iniquity' describes our sinful state. (Consider the impact of Adam's sin.) See, for example, Psalm 51:1-6.

BUT through the second Adam we are offered perfection, in spite of ourselves, as our assured future if we accept the offer of God's amazing grace and forgiveness.

1 Corinthians 15: 45-49

First Adam is a living being, natural, earthly; second Adam is spiritual, life-giving, of heaven. We receive the earthly body first, the spiritual, resurrection, perfect body is to come. We bear the image of the earthly man but, as Christians, will bear the resurrection image of the heavenly man, Jesus, with perfect bodies in the resurrection.

Romans 5:18-21

In Adam all people are condemned to death, but in Jesus we can be justified and given life. In Adam we are all sinners, in Jesus we can be seen as rescued, restored humanity. Adam's sin results in our death, but in Jesus we can know eternal life through God's grace.

Romans 5:6-8

We were powerless, ungodly, sinners – what a description! But in spite of all this God sent his Son as the second Adam to die for us. So in first Adam we inherited our deformity but for those who will accept rescue through the second Adam there is salvation in love.

So what?

- 1 This thinking of first and second Adam is all about God's rescue plan on a huge stage. In thinking about our own salvation don't ignore the bigger picture. Be amazed!
- 2 We are all sinners through falling short, crossing the lines set and being sons of the first Adam. The Bible describes us as powerless, ungodly, sinners, destined for death.
- 3 Be astounded at God's grace in sending his Son to take the punishment for sin by being the second Adam. He effectively deals with sin as his resurrection demonstrates.
- 4 If we will only accept his offer of life we inherit resurrection bodies to come. If we currently suffer in our bodies, there will be a time when we have new bodies, perfect in every way.
- 5 If you are a Christian disciple, whatever detailed pressures and worries you face this week including impending death, Jesus has conquered all as the second Adam.
- 6 But if you have never received Jesus' death for you personally, today is your opportunity to do that. Move from being of the first Adam to being of the second, the Lord Jesus Christ. He offers life to all who will come to him. He has conquered sin and death. Claim his free gift of forgiveness.