

From Adam to Adam: An Incredible Human Potential (Part One)

It makes us think—really—about how many people claim to believe in a creator God and claim to be a Christian—a follower of Christ—but can't explain the purpose for their own existence or understand what lies ahead for humanity in an uncertain world. Could it be that many professing Christians don't really know who Jesus is and don't fully comprehend the message he brought about a coming kingdom of God?

Now what makes news today is religion. In particular, the religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. And with the coming of the internet, and millions of people crowding into the collective religious conversation, we find first and foremost a mixed bag of ideas of what people believe about God—and in the religion of Christianity—about Jesus. With some ideas being old, and some being new, but none having the power to sway the many about what they ought to believe about the person of Jesus. And, if we take this one step further, what people should believe about the message Jesus brought to the remnant of the Commonwealth of Israel.

Because it is a message that concerns everyone in the entire world.

So, let's talk about this for a moment.

When we look at what is commonly called the “gospels,” we soon discover that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John had something to say about “beginnings,” and each one focused—with some

overlap in context—on a certain aspect of the life of Jesus. And when it comes to the “beginning” that is addressed in each of the gospel works we are compelled to ask an important question.

The beginning of what?

Now, Matthew tells us that Jesus had his beginning in the family of Abraham, and he was the promised seed through Isaac who would be a blessing to the Commonwealth of Israel—and according to the nature of the promises—to the rest of the world (Eph. 2:11-13). Then Mark points out there was an appointed time when Jesus began to preach a message about a coming kingdom of God that would bring about those blessings to the world. Also, the physician Luke tells us about two beginnings—implying by his genealogical record, two creations—and the first creation began with the first man Adam, and the second began with another “Adam”—the “last” Adam—who was Jesus.

Consequently, when faced with Jesus' genealogical pedigree, we are brought to rethink what Luke had to say about this second Adam, because it tells us something important about the nature and person of Jesus.

So, when we examine what Luke had to say about Jesus, he makes it clear that Jesus had a time of conception—a beginning—and he was born a child of Mary. This, according to Luke, established Jesus in the genealogy of

Abraham through his mother, and not through his father, Joseph.

However, Luke added something else to the story by creating a genealogy connecting Jesus to the first Adam, who was understood to be the son of God (Lk. 3:23-38).

Making for a most unique pedigree.

Not only for its length, but also because it links Jesus back to a time when the first man—made in the image of God—was created and became a “living soul,” with a greater mental capacity than all other creatures on the earth. Luke then takes this genealogy of the first man Adam down through many generations to the birth of Jesus, to the person who [would be qualified of God](#) to become a mediator between humankind and the creator God, who is the Father. (By his rebellion, the first Adam put a barrier between himself and God, requiring a qualified mediator between God and his human creation, which has affected the spiritual development of all humanity that came from this first Adam.)

Noting that the Apostle Paul tells us: “*there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*” (I Tim. 2:5). And, it is this man who was defined by Paul as the “last Adam” when he wrote his letter to the churches in the southeast of Europe, and he said to them: “the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was *made* a quickening spirit” (I Cor. 15:45).

Leaving us to realize that the pedigree presented by Luke was comprised of a genealogy reckoned from Adam to Adam.

Establishing for us a timeline and a partial outline for the plan God. One that relates to the role of Jesus as a high priest and as a mediator between us and the one God (I Cor. 15:21-23).

So, what is important to keep in mind is that the first Adam had a beginning, but he was also the beginning of something as well, the beginning of all humanity in the image of Adam. That is you and me. And we have a history recorded for us in the Bible from the first Adam to the last Adam, not only defining the parameters of Scripture’s historical framework, but also creating a context for defining prophesied events for the end of the age and the second coming of Jesus.

Also, with this context, we should hold the thought that Adam’s descendants have already passed more than 6000 years on this earth, showing Adam’s family history filled with events reflecting an age of great paradox, with amazing accomplishments and great catastrophes, and everything in between, and it has continued this way since the time of the first Adam to our modern day (Rom. 5:12-15).

Consequently, when we examine the history of Adam’s world, it is difficult to see how there might be some greater purpose being worked out with humanity, and that Adam’s beginning, and our beginning from Adam, should have any special meaning for us today (Rom. 8:20).

Except for one thing.

There is an important relationship between the first Adam and the second Adam.

And this is what we find in Scripture.

That the first Adam is understood to have been a “figure” of one who was to come later, and that was the “last” Adam.

Allowing us to say that the first Adam was a “shadow” of a future Adam, making those born in the line of the first Adam to also be a figure of things to come. Revealing to us that there is something [yet future for all humankind](#), something which transcends the present circumstances and the nature of the world we live in today.

Therefore we have good reason to think this through even more.

Now, if humankind is born into the lineage of Adam, then we also are a shadow of things to come, just as Jesus was when he was born of his mother Mary.

Perhaps we have never thought of it this way before.

Nevertheless, Luke does establish this very premise through his genealogical composition beginning with the mother of Jesus, which lists the generations going all the way back to the first Adam. And by this genealogy we can understand why Jesus would refer to himself as the “son of man,” acknowledging that he had a “spirit of man” just like the first Adam.

For we find that only later in Jesus’ life did others begin to better understand he was the “son of God,” and they, like we today, also came to learn how he “came out from God” by being conceived (procreated) of the holy spirit of God (Jn. 16:27-28).

Which brings us to ask an additional question.

If Adam was a figure of someone to come, and we are a shadow of things to come, and Jesus also was a shadow of things to come as a descendant of the first Adam, then what does that tell us about who Jesus is and the significance of the “good news” he brought about a coming kingdom of God?

This is where Luke gives us an important part of the story about the life of Jesus.

Let’s remember that Luke memorialized what the angel said to Mary and how she would conceive a son by reason of the holy spirit, and the child would be her son, and a human being born in the line of the first man Adam (Lk. 1:31). He was, in a relatively similar sense, brought into being like the first Adam—by reason of God’s spirit—and he was also a “living soul”—one that could sin, and one that could die, and one that required a resurrection from the dead to live again (Gal. 4:4).

More importantly, Jesus had a beginning, not so unlike the first Adam, and as Adam was the beginning of something—so was Jesus. Allowing us to say that Jesus’ own life foreshadowed something to come in the future. And this is understood from the writings of the Apostle John, and we read of this in the context of the letter initially directed to the church of Laodicea to whom he wrote: “and unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14).

Here Jesus claims to be the beginning of something, and that something was a “creation,” and it is understood as such because Jesus was an “Adam.”

Which is a point that bears repeating.

For Jesus was the “last Adam” and he was the “beginning” of a creation likened to the first Adam.

However, Jesus had no posterity, and yet the Bible tells us Jesus was also the “firstborn among many brethren,” and in Scripture we also learn that even we should be “conformed to the image of his Son”—that is to the image of God’s son Jesus—and this would someday include the first Adam (Rom 8:16-17; 29).

Meaning that if we are now a shadow of things to come because we are in the image of the first Adam, then we are expected to be—in the future—in the image of the last Adam. Implying that the creation of this earth, and the family of Adam in this world, are only a figure of what is to be revealed in the future. But our understanding of what that is exactly is difficult for us to picture in our minds, and so the Apostle Paul tells us that: “for now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Cor. 13:12).

Implying further that what God is doing by and through Jesus is relative to a creation—the creation of the children of God.

For we see that the genealogy given to us by Luke not only starts with an Adam and ends with an Adam, but he reveals to us in a genealogical setting that we have a first creation and a second

creation, and the first only foreshadows the second, which leads us to consider what God is doing by and through Jesus (Col. 2:12, 17).

But that is getting ahead of ourselves for the moment.

So, let’s go back to the Gospel of John and understand the “beginning” that he is talking about in his gospel narrative, and we premise this “beginning” with our understanding of how the first Adam came into being.

And we know how and when that was.

Because the story is in the book of Genesis, and there we are told how and when the spirit of God manifested itself and fluttered down and formed the first man from the material substance of the ground. Giving Adam a “spirit” that imparted the power of human intellect and fashioned him in a functionally materialized image—thinker, thought, mover—of God.

Something Paul expounded upon when he identified this “spirit” as being synonymous with our intellect, and he said: “for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:11).

Giving us this conclusion.

That the first Adam simply became a living, breathing and thinking human being with the capacity to be creative and to have the preeminent dominion of things on this earth. But the history of this dominion is again a record of great accomplishment and catastrophic

destruction, and without something changing this path there is little expectation that we can solve our problems and have prosperity and peace for everyone in the world.

It is our expected future.

Unless something can change our human nature.

That is to say from the nature of the first Adam to the nature of the second Adam. Which brings us to the “beginning” witnessed by John the Baptist and Jesus as recorded in the gospel of John.

(Continued in part two of this series.)  (andrewburdettewrites.com)