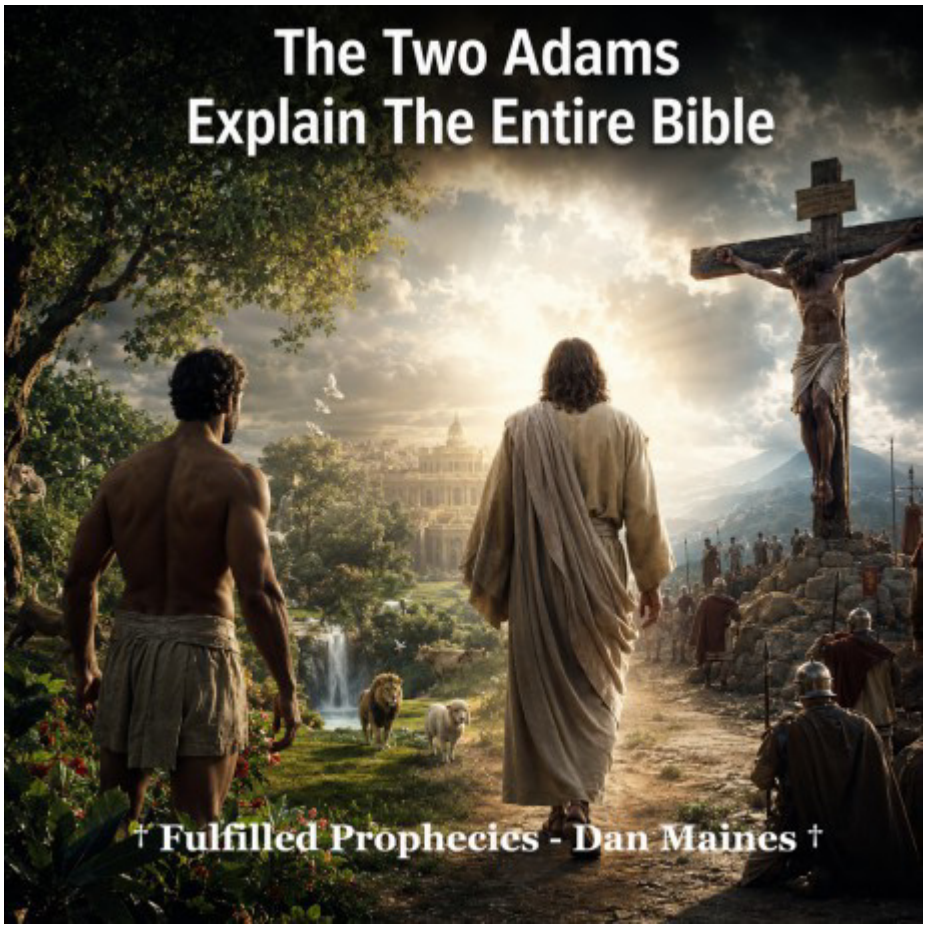
Fulfilled Prophecies

The Two Adams Explain The Entire Bible



By Dan Maines

The Two Adams Explain The Entire Bible

Introduction

† The Bible's story can be understood through two representative men, Adam and Jesus Christ. The first Adam stands at the beginning of the old creation, and Christ, the last Adam, stands at the beginning of the New Creation.

† This isn't merely a comparison Paul happened to make in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. The two Adams reveal the structure of the biblical story, creation, image, garden, tree, bride, dominion, sin, death, exile, resurrection, and New

Creation.
† Genesis begins with a man, a garden, a bride, a tree, and access to God's presence. Revelation ends with God's people, a bride, the tree of life, restored dominion, and unrestricted access to God's presence (Genesis 2:8-9, 18-24; Revelation 21:2-3; 22:1-5).
† What Adam lost through disobedience, Christ recovered through obedience. Where Adam brought condemnation and death, Christ brought justification and life (Romans 5:18-19).
† The Bible therefore isn't a collection of disconnected religious stories. It's one continuous redemptive story moving from Adam to Christ, from creation to New Creation, and from exile from God's presence to restored fellowship with God.

Genesis 1:26-28
Then God said, "Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every crawling thing that crawls on the earth." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
† Adam was created in God's image and commissioned to exercise dominion. Humanity's original calling involved representing God's rule within His creation (Psalm 8:4-6).
† Sin damaged humanity's faithful expression of that calling, but Christ appears as the perfect image of God. What humanity failed to display in Adam is perfectly revealed in Christ (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3).
† This makes the image of God theme much larger than Genesis alone. The story moves from humanity created in God's image to a redeemed people being renewed according to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:10).

Genesis 2:8-9
The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God caused every tree to grow that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
† Eden was more than beautiful scenery. It was the place where humanity lived in fellowship with God, and the tree of life represented life in God's presence (Genesis 3:8, 22).
† The tree of life disappears from humanity's reach after Adam's fall, but it appears again at the end of Revelation. That isn't accidental. Revelation deliberately brings the biblical story back to its Genesis beginning (Revelation 22:2, 14).
† Genesis shows humanity expelled from the place of life. Revelation shows redeemed humanity restored to the presence of God and the tree of life. The story that begins in a garden reaches its goal in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2-3; 22:1-5).

Genesis 2:21-24
So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "At last this is bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called 'woman,' Because she was taken out of man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.
† The first Adam is presented with his bride, and Paul later uses this marriage pattern to explain Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:31-32).
† The biblical bride theme therefore begins in Genesis and reaches its climax in Revelation. Scripture moves from Adam and his bride to Christ and His bride, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9-10).

† The first marriage wasn't an isolated event. Paul explicitly says the one-flesh mystery ultimately speaks of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32).

Genesis 3:17-19
Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; With hard labor you shall eat from it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; Yet you shall eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Until you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."
† Adam's disobedience introduced death into the human story. Paul directly connects Adam's sin with sin and death entering the world (Romans 5:12).
† Adam stood before a tree and disobeyed God. Christ went obediently to a tree and remained faithful even to death (Philippians 2:8; 1 Peter 2:24).
† The contrast couldn't be stronger. Adam's act brought condemnation, while Christ's righteous act brought justification of life (Romans 5:18).
† Even the thorns of Genesis reappear in the passion of Christ when the soldiers place a crown of thorns on His head (Matthew 27:29). The imagery of Adam's curse surrounds the suffering of the last Adam.

Genesis 3:22-24
Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out with his hand, and take fruit also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"- therefore the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

† Adam's story becomes a story of exile. Sin drove humanity away from the garden sanctuary and barred access to the tree of life.
† Exile then becomes one of Scripture's major patterns. Israel would later experience national exile after covenant disobedience, repeating Adam's pattern on a larger scale (Deuteronomy 28:63-64; 2 Kings 17:18-23).
† Redemption therefore isn't merely about forgiveness. It's about restored access to God. Revelation closes with the servants of God seeing His face, exactly where the biblical story was always heading (Revelation 22:3-4).

Romans 5:12, 18-19
Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all mankind, because all sinned - So then, as through one offense the result was condemnation to all mankind, so also through one act of righteousness the result was justification of life to all mankind. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.
† Paul interprets the human story through two representative men. Adam represents disobedience, condemnation, sin, and death. Christ represents obedience, righteousness, justification, and life.
† The decisive contrast isn't simply between bad behavior and good behavior. It's between two covenant heads and the worlds associated with them (1 Corinthians 15:22, 45-49).
† Adam's failure explains why redemption required more than repairing humanity's behavior. Humanity needed a new representative, a faithful man who would succeed where the first man failed.
† Jesus didn't merely undo isolated consequences of Adam's sin. He established a new humanity characterized by righteousness and life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:15).

1 Corinthians 15:21-22
For since by a man death came, by a Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.
† Paul places resurrection directly inside the Adam-Christ story. Death came through the first man, and resurrection comes through Christ.
† This means resurrection isn't disconnected from Genesis. It's God's answer to the death introduced in Adam's world (Romans 5:12-21).
† Paul's categories are corporate, in Adam and in Christ. The movement is from the humanity identified with Adam and death into the humanity identified with Christ and life (Romans 6:4-11).
† The resurrection of Christ announced that the age of the last Adam had begun. Jesus emerged from death as the firstfruits of the resurrection harvest (1 Corinthians 15:20).

1 Corinthians 15:45-49
So also it is written: "The first man, Adam, became a living person." The last Adam was a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second Man is from heaven. As is the earthy one, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly One, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.
† Paul explicitly calls Jesus the last Adam. This isn't a title we have imposed on Scripture. It's the inspired interpretation of Christ's place in the biblical story.
† Notice Paul's return to the theme of image. Genesis began with humanity created in God's image, and Paul describes the redemptive movement from bearing the image of the earthly man to bearing the image of the heavenly man.
† Christ isn't merely another Adam who starts another temporary cycle. He's the last Adam. God's redemptive purpose reaches its goal in Him (2 Corinthians 1:20).
† The old humanity found its identity in Adam. The New

Creation humanity finds its identity in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17
Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
† New Creation isn't merely a future renovation of physical matter. Paul said that those who are in Christ participate in New Creation.
† Notice the connection with Paul's Adam theology. Humanity was once defined by being in Adam, but believers are now defined by being in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 8:1).
† The New Creation began in Christ and extends to those united with Him. God's answer to the old humanity isn't another version of Adam's world, it's a new humanity in the last Adam (Ephesians 2:10, 15).
† This is why the New Testament repeatedly speaks of putting off the old man and putting on the new man, who is being renewed according to the image of the Creator (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10).

Revelation 21:1-3
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,
† Revelation brings together New Creation, bride, dwelling, and restored divine presence. These themes reach backward through the entire Bible to Genesis.
† Genesis begins with God dwelling with humanity in a garden. Revelation ends with God's dwelling established with His people. The Bible has traveled from lost presence to restored presence.
† The bride introduced through Adam's marriage pattern

reaches her covenant fulfillment in the New Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb (Ephesians 5:31-32; Revelation 21:9-10).
† The direction is also important. New Jerusalem comes down from heaven from God. The biblical goal isn't humanity permanently escaping God's creation, it's God dwelling with His redeemed people.

Revelation 22:1-5
And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illuminate them; and they will reign forever and ever.
† Here the Bible deliberately returns to Genesis. The tree of life is back. The curse is removed. God's presence is unrestricted. His servants reign. The themes lost through Adam are restored through Christ.
† Adam lost access to the tree of life, but Revelation shows the tree available within the New Jerusalem. Adam experienced the curse, but Revelation declares that the curse is gone.
† Adam was commissioned to exercise dominion, and Revelation ends with God's servants reigning. The dominion theme that began in Genesis reaches its redemptive goal in the kingdom of Christ (Genesis 1:26-28; Revelation 22:5).
† Adam hid from God's presence, but God's servants now see His face (Genesis 3:8-10; Revelation 22:4).
† Genesis and Revelation aren't two unrelated books sitting at opposite ends of the Bible. Revelation completes the story Genesis began. Garden, tree, bride, image, dominion, death, exile, life, and divine presence all find their resolution in Christ.

Historical References

† Irenaeus, writing in the second century, developed the Adam-Christ parallel extensively in Against Heresies. He described Christ as retracing humanity's story and succeeding in obedience where Adam had failed.

† Justin Martyr also contrasted Adam's disobedience with Christ's obedience and recognized Christ's work as the reversal of humanity's fall.

† Augustine later emphasized the two-humanity structure found in Paul, humanity associated with Adam through sin and death, and redeemed humanity receiving life through Christ.

† These historical witnesses didn't create Paul's Adam-Christ theology. They demonstrate that early Christians recognized the connection between Genesis, Adam, Christ, redemption, and restored life.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't live waiting for another Adam. Jesus is the last Adam, and God's New Creation has already been inaugurated in Him (1 Corinthians 15:45; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

† Our identity isn't ultimately determined by Adam's failure. Those who belong to Christ are identified with the One who conquered sin and death and brought life (Romans 5:17-19).

† We don't need to search for another physical Eden. God's presence is with His covenant people, and believers have access to Him through Christ (Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 10:19-22).

† We live as New Creation people now. We're being renewed according to the image of our Creator and conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:10).

† The Bible's story gives us confidence about where we stand. Adam isn't the final word. Exile isn't the final word. Death isn't the final word. Christ is the last Adam, resurrection has come through Him, and New Creation is the world of the New Covenant.

† When we read Scripture from Genesis to Revelation through the two Adams, the pieces come together. The garden leads to

the city, the first bride points toward the Lamb's bride, the forbidden tree gives way to the cross and the restored tree of life, exile gives way to access, death gives way to life, and Adam gives way to Christ.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why does Paul call Jesus the last Adam?
A: Because Jesus stands as the head of a new humanity. The first Adam brought sin and death through disobedience, while Christ brought righteousness and life through obedience (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:45).

Q: Does the Adam-Christ comparison really connect Genesis with Revelation?
A: Yes. Genesis introduces the tree of life, bride, dominion, curse, and God's presence. Revelation closes with the tree of life, the bride, restored reign, removal of the curse, and God's presence with His people (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:8-9, 21-24; Revelation 21:2-3; 22:1-5).

Q: What does being in Christ mean?
A: It means our covenant identity is found in Christ rather than Adam. Paul contrasts being in Adam with being in Christ and describes those in Christ as New Creation (1 Corinthians 15:22; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Q: Has the New Creation already begun?
A: Yes. Paul said, "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." New Creation is already a present reality in Christ and His people (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15).

Q: Why does Revelation bring back the tree of life?
A: Because Revelation completes Genesis. Humanity was barred from the tree after Adam's fall, but the tree appears again in New Jerusalem, showing restored life and fellowship with God through Christ (Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation 22:1-5).

Q: What's the simplest way to understand the two Adams?
A: Adam explains the entrance of sin, condemnation, exile, and death. Christ explains righteousness, justification, restoration, resurrection, and New Creation (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †
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Source Index
† Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:8-9; Genesis 2:21-24; Genesis 3:17-19; Genesis 3:22-24; Romans 5:12, 18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 21:1-3; Revelation 22:1-5
† Historical writers: Irenaeus, Against Heresies; Justin Martyr; Augustine

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