

Jesus Christ: the New Adam

In [1 Corinthians 15:45](#), St. Paul compares Jesus to Adam,

Thus it is written, The first man Adam became a living being;” the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

This is one of those very simple scripture verses that packs a wallop theologically. Let’s take a look at other verses of scripture and see how this is so very true.

Adam

In [Genesis 2](#), we learn that Adam was formed out of the dust of the earth by God. God breathed the breath of life into Adam. The perfect and sin-free Adam eventually fell into sin in [Genesis 3](#) by disobeying God, accepting the lies of the devil (about not dying and being like God), and eating the forbidden fruit from a tree, which allowed sin and damnation to enter the world. God then told Adam that he would have to till the earth to obtain his daily bread. He would do this with sweat on his brow, and the ground would be full of thorns. Adam, the bridegroom of Eve, was naked, and had to start wearing clothes as a result of his disobedience. Adam was ejected from Paradise by God, so that he would not eat the fruit of another tree in the Garden of Eden, known as the tree of life, which would give him eternal life. An angel with a flaming sword was then stationed at the gate of Paradise to guard it so as to prevent Adam from reentering.

Jesus, the New Adam

“Being born of a woman” ([Galatians 4:4](#)), Jesus is thereby necessarily a direct descendant of Adam.

The perfect and sin-free Jesus, who said that he is the bridegroom in [Matthew 9:15](#), also declared Himself to be “The Bread of Life” in [John 6](#). He said that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood to have eternal life. This reference to eating, of course, is the antidote to overcome what Adam did. Jesus, who died on the tree of life known as the cross, commands us to eat the fruit from that tree known as The Eucharist (his flesh and blood), so as to give us eternal life, and to overcome the two lies of the devil to Adam. The devil said that if you eat the forbidden fruit, “You shall not die.” (LIE!). By eating the fruit of the cross, the flesh and blood of Christ, “You shall live forever,” said Jesus (TRUTH!). The devil also told Adam that if he ate the forbidden fruit, he would be like God (LIE!). Jesus said that if we eat His flesh and drink his blood, God would abide in us, and we in Him (TRUTH!).

The bookend parallels between Adam and Jesus don't end there, though. Just as Adam was ejected from Paradise into this world so that he could eventually be saved from his disobedient sin, God Himself promised that he would come down from Paradise to the new dwelling place of Adam (this world) as the good shepherd in order to save us all from Adam's original sin ([Ezekiel 34:10-16](#)). Just as Adam's disobedience to God allowed sin and damnation to enter the world, the obedience of Jesus, the new Adam, to God, his loving Father, allowed salvation to enter the world. Just as Adam threw away his sinless status through disobedience to God, Jesus kept his sinless status through obedience to God the Father. Jesus said that the devil is the ruler of this world ([John 14:30](#)). Jesus is the ruler of the everlasting world, in Heaven. Just the devil once conquered man in Paradise, the dwelling place of God, now, Jesus, a true man and who is also true God, conquers the devil in his dwelling place, this world.

Jesus eventually had to undergo his holy and sorrowful passion to redeem mankind. During His passion, some of the curses of Adam, namely sweat on his brow to get his daily bread and thorns ([Genesis 3:18-19](#)), were placed squarely on the head of Christ, the Bread of Life, first in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he sweat blood, and then in Jerusalem, when he had a crown of thorns placed on His head. Whereas Adam was naked and had to put clothes on as a result of his disobedience, Jesus, through His obedience to God, was clothed on the way to Calvary, and then stripped naked before crucifixion. Adam was formed out of the dust of the earth; Jesus fell three times into the dust of the Via Dolorosa on the way to Calvary. Adam fell because of the wooden tree of knowledge of good and evil; Jesus fell under the weight of the wooden cross, the new Tree of Life (the Eucharist gives us eternal life, [John 6:50-51](#)). God breathed the breath of life into mankind; Jesus suffocated on the cross through the actions of mankind.

Jesus, the Bridegroom

There is also much bridegroom imagery during the Passion of Christ as well. Previously mentioned was that Jesus was stripped naked before crucifixion. This is something that the bridegroom does before his bride on the wedding night. Jesus, in what some consider to be his last will and testament, giving away his most beloved possession on earth, said from the cross in [John 19:26-27](#), to his beloved disciple (which is all of us, by the way, if and only if we too consider ourselves to be beloved disciples of Christ!), "Behold your mother." And to Mary he said, "Behold your son!" These are words that one would normally hear in a maternity ward, at the birth of a new child. But here the theological meaning of Jesus' words can be considered to be in reference to Jesus' giving birth to the Church. And these marital/birthing references continue in scripture. Jesus said just before he died, "It is consummated." In other words, Jesus' death on the cross can be considered to be like a type of the conjugal act which permanently joins bridegroom and bride as one flesh. When the Roman soldier stuck the spear into the side of Christ, both blood and water flowed out from His side. This represents three very

significant theological truths:

1. Blood and water (afterbirth) are always present at the birth of a new child.
2. The blood and water flowing from His side also represent Baptism and the Eucharist, the two sacraments which unite mankind to Christ.
3. The Jewish temple had a small stream flowing through it, which removed the blood of the sacrificed animals from the temple. Jesus is our new Temple in the New Jerusalem ([Revelation 21:22](#)), so the blood and water flowing from His side invoke this temple imagery as well.

Archbishop Sheen once said that the spearing of Jesus on the cross reminds us of the angel with the flaming sword at the gate of Paradise as well. It seems that in order for man to reenter Paradise, it is necessary for the angel to strike us with the sword. Here Jesus physically undergoes stabbing, while Mary undergoes a spiritual stabbing as well (Simeon told Mary in [Luke 2:35](#) that “a sword will pierce through your own soul also, that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed”). For the rest of us, the stabbing with the sword is all of our suffering in this life, something that Peter said was required of us all ([1 Peter 5:9](#)).

Other Typologies of Christ in the Bible

Jesus, a carpenter who made his living as a man with wood, using a hammer and nails, was murdered by mankind with a hammer, wood, and nails. Jesus, the Bread of Life, was born in the town of Bethlehem, which means in English “House of Bread.” His mother Mary placed him in a manger, which is a feeding trough for sheep. Jesus offers Himself as our daily bread in Mass ([Acts 2:46](#)), which is something we pray for every time we say the Our Father – “Give us this day our DAILY BREAD” (daily supernatural bread is an Old Testament reference to manna, the supernatural bread from heaven for the people of God in the desert). And what desert could be drier and more deadly than the toxic secular culture in which we live today? By partaking of the daily Eucharist in Mass, we become the successors to the Israelites in the desert under Moses. Only instead of Moses, we have Jesus as our leader. Instead of daily bread, which only satisfies physical hunger to sustain life here on earth, the Eucharist satisfies our spiritual hunger and gives us eternal life.