

# Adam and Christ

by John Nelson Darby

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*Christ is the opposite of Adam in every particular, vindicating the truth, love, and majesty of God, and offering redemption and peace to all who believe in Him.*

**Scripture:** Romans 5:14

**Topics:** "Contrast of Adam and Christ", "Grace and Justification"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby explores the profound contrast between Adam and Christ, emphasizing how Adam's sin brought condemnation to humanity while Christ's grace offers justification and life. He illustrates that Adam, as the head of a sinful world, represents all sinners, whereas Christ, as the head of a new creation, embodies grace and truth. Darby highlights that through Christ's suffering and sacrifice, God's love and majesty are vindicated, providing believers with hope and a new identity as children of God. He calls for a recognition of our association with Christ, urging believers to live in the fullness of His grace and to embrace their identity as heirs with Him. Ultimately, Darby encourages the congregation to seek a deeper relationship with Christ, who is the source of all blessings and glory.

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## Transcript

ADAM AND CHRIST

ROMANS 5: 14-21

In the latter part of this chapter is exhibited strikingly the sin, and the consequences of that sin, wrought and incurred by Adam; and the grace that is manifested in Jesus Christ, as contrasted the one with the other.

This is a very important position, as displaying the character and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, contrasted with the first Adam, of whom, in his innocence, the latter was a type and figure ; the one as the head of all grace and truth, the representative of all believers ; and the other as the head of all sin and misery, a representative of all sinners by nature. This distinction is mentioned in I Corinthians 15: " The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven " ; and here, verse 14, he is said to be " the figure of him that was to come."

The over-abundant love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is testified of in the next verse : " For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one

man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." And the contrast is very striking as we continue: " And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift ; for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by one righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

Here we have, in a perspective view, the effect of Adam's sin, and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see here the way in which He met the whole question of the controversy between God and man.

In the Psalms we have an exhibition of the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, under sufferings, trials, temptations, and afflictions ; and throughout the Scriptures we have the facts of the life, thoughts, feelings, and character of Adam and Christ. We have in Adam the head and root of a sinful world, lying in wickedness and misery; and in Christ the head and root of a world of blessedness, reigning in life, opening a new and living way," prevailing over man's sin and ruin. Not merely the saving of souls to, God, but positively triumphing over man's evil, over the utmost evil man could do. Not only undoing what man had done, but over-abounding in blessedness the ruin man had brought on himself. Not only setting aside the work done by man, but manifesting the riches of divine love over evil, sin, ruin, and misery, allowed for the purpose of displaying more astonishingly the greatness of God's love, and His direct contrast in all things to man.

Now this is what we are to look for in Christ ; a remedy adequate to the evil sin had wrought; a remedy that should meet and overbalance the weight of iniquity : and we have it in Christ, in the exceeding riches of His grace. The way and means were of His own devising and His own executing, to display His goodness to us in Christ Jesus, that He should be the substance of the joy of His people, the rest of their souls, the object of their hopes, the desire of their affections. And such He is. Evil has abounded, and sin has taken its free, full course. We shall trace its root, rise, and progress in the first Adam, in whose sin we have the complete and entire alienation of man's heart from God: the virtual denial and rejection of God as a God over him, and the practical consequences of that denial-the taking of Satan as a god in preference, and trusting and confiding in him rather than in God.

Now, I say, this is just the position the world is in at present. They have practically and decidedly taken Satan for god, to the rejection of the Lord ; they have lost all hopes of favour ; they have forfeited all claim to any blessing God can confer. All the world has done this positively and willingly; and every individual is doing so, until Christ calls him out of the world in Principle, desire, and soul; brings him to rest on Him for all things ; Just undoes in his soul what the sin of the first Adam (and he himself springing from that root) has done ; makes him an heir of God; Puts into his heart the Spirit, crying, " Abba, Father " ; and enables him to know and understand the association of principle, feeling, and actual Position in which he stands with Christ, when exclaiming, " MY Father and your Father, my God and your God." From thence is all our hope and happiness ; we are brought over to trust Him, to live in His life, and no longer to live under the dominion of the devil, who " worketh in the children of disobedience." We actually "become sons of God," are delivered from the offences of the first Adam, and are no longer in the position of the world.

The sin of Adam induced the wrath of heaven's offended majesty ; and we shall see that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ just met, in every circumstance and in every position, this situation ; as a man, presenting the very opposite of what Adam was after his transgression. Let us view Adam first in his creation, as he came out of the hands of God-the image of God-in His own likeness; we see him a type of Him in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily: everything subordinate to him, put in authority under him; all the animal-everything of animate and inanimate nature in subserviency to him; all brought

to him to give them names: "And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

Psalm 8 evidently refers to this, from verse 4. But in connection with Hebrews 2, where it is quoted, we find it was typical of the Lord Jesus Christ: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels" (in His humiliation). "We see not yet all things put under him" (but that we shall see at His coming). "But," says the apostle, "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Here He became practically the head and root of a new creation, manifested so at His resurrection. The Lord was doing for His people, in His humiliation, all that was necessary to put away sin—suffered what was due to sin, and suffered unto death. Being then quickened according to the Spirit of holiness as a risen Saviour, He becomes the Head of a new creation, as Adam was of the old.

View Adam in the garden, and we shall discern in his conduct that he had everything that qualified him to be the head and root of a sinful world. So Christ (as manifesting the very opposite conduct, under the most difficult circumstances) is eminently qualified to be the Head of His people. Adam was placed in an innocent world, surrounded by every blessing, and with every holy and righteous feeling which could call forth his love and gratitude to the great Giver, and which ought to have led him to confidence in Him. God had placed trust in him: He put him as a steward over His goods. He reflected His own image on him, and made him capable of holding converse with Himself: he was the link, as it were, between God and the world.

Being thus trusted of God, put into this highly honourable situation, everything made for him, God delighting in him, as in Proverbs 8: Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men": in this situation of trust, confidence, and delight, what followed? How did Adam comport himself and sustain his integrity? The enemy of souls approached. With subtlety he inquires, "Hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" and, on hearing God's authoritative threatening in case of delinquency, adds, "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." At the first outset he impugns the truth of God's word, and endeavours to make Him a liar.

Now the man was in full recognition of God's command - "Thou shalt not eat of the tree." He knew it was a pledge of his obedience; that God, as supreme Sovereign, should have the satisfaction of being obeyed: he knew the Lord had a right to this obedience, and fully understood that He had threatened punishment in case of disobedience; he knew the Lord had said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Here we see three things in which the devil desired the man should dishonour God: first, as to His grace: secondly, as to His truth: and, thirdly, as to the majesty of His Godhead. On this suggestion we find man really acted, and did so dishonour God.

We shall behold, in this transaction, the first Adam denying virtually God's grace truth, and majesty; and in the second Man we are to see them vindicated and honoured; for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," the majesty of Jehovah being also manifested in Him. Let us now see how Satan and man dealt with God's truth, love, and majesty. God, as it has been observed, bestowed all favours on this man, made him an example to all the universe of His manifested love, and gave him just one command, that man might have the opportunity of shewing his sense of the favours of God by an easy observance of it. Satan comes and says to this effect: Did God say so and so? Do not you believe Him; He did not tell you the truth. God knows He has kept the only good away from you; do not trust Him. He does not mean it for your good; He

means a lie; He means to deceive you. He is only keeping it from you because He knows well that if you eat of it, you will be as God, " knowing good and evil." Here then was the temptation to distrust God, to doubt His love, and to assume the privileges of God Himself: " Ye shall be as gods."

Now in this is included every principle in which God could be dishonoured by man in the position in which Adam then stood. And how did he act ? When he saw (or she saw, which is the same for our purpose) " that the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise,' he did, eat it, in positive and known disobedience to God's command; he acted on the present enjoyment, without any regard- to consequences ; and the world has ever since acted precisely on the same principles, and precisely on the same grounds : are they condemned ?

Many endeavour to screen themselves by this : I have done no harm to my neighbour ; I am not guilty of dishonesty, of thieving, murder, and. such like. No more was Adam; he did no harm to his neighbour (except as his conduct involved all in his guilt) ; but this was just his condemnation, in not recognising and acting on the truth, love, and majesty of God; in -acting on the devil's suggestions rather than God's, and so making God a liar, God says, " Ye shall die " ; the devil says, " Ye shall not and there is just the question between them. Which will man believe ? The devil puts the present pleasantness of the thing before the man, and he cares not for the consequences ; let those come on the man himself, so that he can lure him to his ruin. He never tells him " the wages of sin is death " ; and man, with the present enjoyments in view, cares not for it either. " The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," have present enjoyment connected with them: so he embraces them and runs after them; though in so doing, he denies the truth of God, rejects His authority, and assumes His power.

This is really what Adam did; and in the consequences we are all naturally involved. He believed the devil rather than God; he thought the devil truer than God; he looked upon him as a better friend than God; just as we should rely on the promise and word of one whom we esteem our best friend. He put the devil's word in place of the law of God ; he looked upon God as an austere judge, and grudging; one who had a good thing to give him, and yet denied it to him, because He did not wish to make him as Himself, but rather was gratified in keeping it from him. This was the opinion man had of God, when he willingly subjected himself to the dominion of Satan.

Now let us view his conduct after he had sinned. What do we find him doing ? Hiding himself. What else could he do ? He would have been well pleased had there been no God to spy on his sin. But it was not so, and he was now confronted. The voice of God called aloud "Adam, where art thou ? He whom He had entrusted with so many blessings now runs away from Him, and hides himself: he had disputed the authority of God, and sold himself to the devil, and withal involved all his posterity in the guilt of rejecting God as a sovereign and taking the devil as a god, bowing down in submission to his will. And in this position is the world at present, in which we are now living, the only living instance of unpunished apostasy : the consequences are to come.

But man is the only intelligent being who is still alive in successful apostasy. What do we find in the case of the fallen angels ? Their sin brought its immediate and irremediable punishment. Man - man alone is abiding in unbelief; condemned indeed, but still the sentence of execution is suspended. God came down to this man who had thus cast off His allegiance ; He came to one who had been His former associate and companion: God brings him out of his hiding-place. What then is man's first act ? To excuse himself : and here again the world most accurately follows his example. They sin, and then plead, as an excuse or extenuation of their guilt, temptation, natural desire, expediency, etc. But we rest on God's truth when we

declare there is no excuse that man makes, which is not, in fact, the very ground of his condemnation, yea, the very reason for it.

One instance from Scripture in passing. In the parable of the marriage supper, the excuse one who was invited gave for not attending was, " I have bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused ." Where was the " needs be " ? Only just this, that he preferred his own gratification to the reception of the Lord's invitation. Just so Adam; his excuse was, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the fruit, and I did eat." The very excuse he brings is the very ground on which God condemns him: "Because thou hast hearkened unto thy wife ... cursed is the ground for thy sake." Thus out of his own mouth was he judged!

Now we pass to the Second Man - the character and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; and we shall see exactly the opposite in every particular. We shall see how in thought, word, and deed, He perfectly vindicated the truth, love, and majesty of the great God of heaven, which man had th shamefully and wilfully dishonoured. How did he vindicate the truth of God ? The Lord had said, " Thou shalt surely die." Christ came as the great witness to His people, that " the wages of sin is death"; and that by imputation only, for He was perfectly and entirely holy. But He took our sins; He bore our iniquities. He was willing to be looked upon as the guilty, and to bear the penalty God had annexed to sin, " Thou shalt surely die," in order to vindicate the truth of God.

If any on earth could be spared the threatened punishment, it was Jesus. Holy in all respects abstractedly of His divinity; entirely free from sin or approximation to it; without the slightest shadow of evil as it regarded Himself, and yet by imputation, willing imputation, His: if any could be spared, it was He. But no God had said it, and Christ came to bear witness to the truth of God's word. If we would see the bitterness of sin, the tremendous consequences of it, and its utter hatefulness in the sight of God, where shall we see it but in the death of Christ, God's fellow, His well-beloved Son ? " He spared not his Son'He delivered Him up to the death of the cross!

We see again how He fully vindicated the love of God. That God, whom man looked upon as a grudging God, keeping back from him that which was desirable-that God gave His only begotten Son for man's transgression I How eminently conspicuous is God's love here, in the sufferings and death of Jesus! The more righteous and holy Jesus was, the more God's love was displayed in giving Him for sin. He needed not to die for His own offences, for He had committed none; nor for His own sins, for He " knew no sin." He was brought nevertheless to the extremity Of suffering and shame, and yet trusted and confided in God, in circumstances all opposite to those in which Adam was placed.

Adam was surrounded with every blessing and comfort: Christ was in the midst of poverty, degradation, and woe; so that He could say, " Reproach hath broken my heart; I am full of heaviness " : "My soul is exceeding sorrowful": "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels": Dogs have compassed me " ; " bulls of Bashan have beset me round " : " I am poured out like water."

Adam was blessed with the full enjoyment of God's countenance up to the moment that he apostatised from God. Christ, under the very dread of this even in prospect, could look upon all other things as light in comparison; as in Psalm 22, when enumerating some of the indignities He was to receive, He says, " They parted my garments . . . they gaped upon me " ; but He adds, " but be not thou far from me, O Lord." And still, in the very moment when God was to visit on His soul the most awful effects of His people's delinquency-when, for their sins and the salvation of their souls, and that they might everlastingly enjoy the

presence of God's countenance, He was to withhold the comfortable perception of it from His expiring Son; when, at the extent and summit of such dreadful agony, the exclamation was drawn from His holy soul, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " yet is the language of His soul, " But thou continuest holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel " : even in the moment of extremest sufferings a doubt of God's faithfulness never passed His holy mind.

" Ye shall be as gods " was the bait the tempter threw out, which succeeded in drawing man from his allegiance to God. Now, how did Christ act as opposed to this ? In Psalm 22 again He says, " I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." And we know that, though God Himself, and equal with God, " He made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Man aspired to be God, and fell; and the Lord Jesus Christ, though very God, humbled Himself to " the dust of death," thus vindicating in His own Person the majesty of the eternal God.

Thus we see that Christ met all the sin and guilt which devolved upon His people, in consequence of Adam's transgression. He did not endeavour to screen the sin, to hide it from God's sight, to excuse that with which He was laden. No, He hung between heaven and earth - " lifted up " - bearing the iniquity of His people in His own body on the tree. Far from denying or concealing it, He desires to open all His soul to God: " All my desires are before thee My groaning is not hid from thee." He feels its bitterness My soul is exceeding sorrowful." Why thus ? He knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth yet He says, " My sins are not hid from thee: shame hath covered my face." What is He then confessing, but His people's sins ? He had none to confess of His own; He therefore takes and holds up and confessed theirs, submitting to the consequences of them.

Now that is just our blessing ; that is just what constitutes our peace and comfort, when by faith we can see Him making these sins of ours His own-bearing them and their deserved punishment; not only lifting them up to God, but owning them, and bearing them away for ever! presenting Himself as the victim, to atone for sins which were committed against the truth, majesty, and love of God. Thus He vindicated God's glory, while He was well qualified to become the head of His people.

As a man He was well qualified, as the transgression came by a man; while His Godhead rendered His obedience meritorious and transferable. And when by faith it is received, it brings the full tide of personal comfort to the believer, just shewing him what he is in the first Adam, and what he is brought to in the Second. He sees Christ as the great High Priest on the day of atonement, bringing in the blood, sprinkling it within the veil, confessing and owning the sins of His people (as in Psalm 40), laying them on the head of the victim, carrying them into the grave of forgetfulness, as the great confessor of the saints, bearing up their sins before the face of God His Father, while in His body and soul He is bearing the consequences, enduring the penalty and doing it away for ever! Remember too, all this, in a way of entire perfectness of intention and obedience ; not deterred from it when in prospect, nor refusing it when offered. Witness the garden of Gethsemane-the bitterness of the cup which the Father gave Him to drink! What perfectness of blessing for His chosen ones in that He did not put it away from Him! and, though He prayed, " Be not thou far from me, O Lord," under a sense of affliction and sorrow, still perfect in suffering, thus becoming the author of salvation to all who shall believe on Him.

Believers, can you then love that world which inflicted such woes on the Lord Jesus ? Do you not see the total distinction opposition in all things between the world and the brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we then walking in the inheritance of the first or the second Adam? Are we practically assimilated, in

thought feeling, deportment, or pursuit, with the world which rejected Christ ? Or are our associations with the Lord? Does this association lead us to say and to feel, Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren? All mankind are naturally and truly associated with the first Adam, and all Christ's people are naturally associated with Him; "complete in Him." As all are heirs of sin and shame by the first Adam, so shall every one that believes be (nay they are so now) heirs with Christ in all things, united to Him in a vital and indissoluble union. They are one with Him in privilege, interest, blessing, and are heirs of all the glory He possesses : "Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Whatever belongs to Him of blessing or glory, He has for His own: " All things are yours," says the apostle, " for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Such being God's truth, let us, brethren, seek renewed knowledge of our personal interest and fellowship with Him. Seek to receive more from Him : the more He gives, the more He is glorified. As certainly as we are by nature united to the first Adam, and bearing his likeness and image, so surely, if we are believers, are we associated with Christ in everything, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Now we see our glorious Head by faith alone ; but soon shall we see Him as He is, in all His glory, and be changed

into that same glory. In the meantime, " neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." May we, then, be filled with the fulness of Christ! The Scriptures open out all the blessings that are in Him: all fulness dwells in Christ; and we, brethren of the Lord, are interested in it, by a union commenced in time, to be consummated in a never-ending and blissful eternity!

J. N. Darby

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