

The Adamic Natures

by Miles J. Stanford

Miles J. Stanford's sermon discusses the dual nature of Christians, emphasizing the significance of the First and Last Adam in understanding sin and salvation.

Scripture: Romans 6:6, Romans 8:3, Ephesians 4:22, 1 John 5:12, Revelation 3:14

Topics: "Human Nature", "Spiritual Identity"

Description

Miles J. Stanford delves into the theological question of whether a Christian has one or two natures, exploring the concepts of the old man being eradicated or not. He discusses the doctrine of the two men - the First Adam and the Last Adam, highlighting how humanity is affected by their positions and conditions. Stanford emphasizes the importance of understanding one's essential identity in Christ and the distinction between the old Adamic life and the new creation in the Last Adam, pointing to the positional and condition factors that shape a believer's spiritual journey.

Transcript

The question we are dealing with is,

Does the Christian have one, or two natures*; has the old man been eradicated, or not?

I believe there are two keys that unlock the scriptural answer. The one is the doctrine of the two men, and the other is the doctrine of position. First we will consider the two representative men--the First Adam and the Last Adam who constitute the foundation of all God's dealings with humanity.

[* nature - an inherent propensity, inclination, bent, or disposition.]

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO MEN

"THE FIRST MAN" -- When "the first man, Adam," sinned, he died positionally--totally dead to God: spirit, soul, and body. Thereafter his position was manifested in his condition; he began to die experientially. In God's mercy, it was some 930 years before Adam fully experienced the inevitable outcome of his position of death.

Adam, as head of the human race, took all of humanity into that position of death. "In Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22). All in Adam have his life and therefore are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). The Adamic life is the source of sin in everyone, whether unsaved or saved (Rom. 5:12).

Due to the Fall, Adam became "flesh"--not only his body, but his soul and spirit as well. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh" (Gen. 6:3). Hence the race spawned by Adam and Eve is "flesh." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). It is not that the natural man has flesh, or is in the condition of flesh; he is flesh.

Paul wrote, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). Note well that he said "my" flesh. As a believer Paul was indwelt by his Adamic life, the old man, and he assumed full responsibility for his sinful actions.

In his position Paul was not "in the flesh," but "in Christ Jesus." Still, in his condition his Adamic life was present with him, and he owned full responsibility for its sinfulness. He said, "Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:7,8). He also said that the believer will, at the Bema, suffer loss for the fleshly deeds done in the body.

Because the first Adam sinned and became mortal flesh, he was superseded by the spiritual Last Adam, the "new Man." This constituted condemned Adam the "old man." The fallen Adam is the old man, he is the flesh; he possesses a sinful nature. One complete man.

The Word speaks of the activities of the old man, both in the unsaved and the saved, as "the wills of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, the workings of the flesh, the wisdom of the flesh, the purposes of the flesh, the warring of the flesh, the glorying of the flesh." It also refers to those who "walk according to the flesh, after the flesh, and make a fair show of the flesh." Here we have the personification of the old man--identically manifested before and after one's salvation.

A man is a substantive entity, a person. The traits, or characteristics, of a man are non-substantive, and comprise his nature. A nature is a composition of attributes, and is not to be considered a substantive entity. Some of the positive characteristics of the old man, aspects of the old nature, are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. However lovely, these are but fleshly facsimiles of the fruit of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5.

On the other hand, some of the negative fleshly characteristics of the old man, aspects of that same old nature indwelling every man are, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and the like."

Beautiful and beneficial as the positive characteristics of the flesh may be, all, including both the positive and the negative, are rejected of God. Why? Because their source is the condemned Adamic life. For "in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing."

"THE SECOND MAN" (the Last Adam) -- Who can deny that the Lord Jesus has two natures? And if two natures, two lives: He is the Son of God, and He is the Son of Man. He is perfect God and Perfect Man in hypostatic union--the oneness of the God-Man.

The blessed aspects of the Lord Jesus' divine-human life and nature are His love, His joy, His peace, His longsuffering, His gentleness, His goodness, His faithfulness, His meekness, and His self-control. All positive--no negative. He was and is, and ever shall be, impeccable.

THE DOCTRINE OF POSITION

THE POSITION FACTOR -- Consider the believer's positional history. Before anything was brought into being--the universe, the world, Adam--I, a chosen, elect, and called person was conceived in my Father's heart and purpose. (See Eph. 1: 4, 5; 2 Tim. 1: 9; Ps. 139:16).

My Father called the world into being, and created Adam to be head of the human race for that world. I was identified positionally with the source of humanity. When Adam sinned and thereby positionally died to God, I died in him. When he became flesh, I became flesh in him. When he was condemned, I was condemned in him.

The rejected old Adam was replaced by the accepted new Man, the Last Adam. When the Father sent His only begotten Son into the world, He subjected Him to the death of the Cross in order to rescue me from my Adamic death, because He loved me as His chosen one from all eternity.

While the Lamb of God was on the Cross, my Father laid all my as-yet-uncommitted sins upon Him, and His death for those sins freed me from their penalty. While the Lord Jesus was on that same Cross the Father identified me, in my Adamic life of sin, with His Son who was made to be that sin (2 Cor. 5:21). In Him, I died unto sin--positionally.

I, the sinful one, was not forgiven--my sins were forgiven, but not the old man, the source of those sins. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3). I was not forgiven in order to start all over as a first-Adam person. No; "I was crucified with Christ"; I died unto sin in Him. In that death I was positionally separated from my Adamic life, the source of sin. The Lord Jesus' death for me redeemed me from the penalty of my sins; my positional death with Him freed me from the condemned Adamic life and its reign.

As "his (God's) workmanship, (newly) created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2: 10), I may be progressively freed from the reign of indwelling Adamic sin in my condition, as I reckon myself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God in Christ (Rom. 6:11).

MY ESSENTIAL IDENTITY --My Father, in eternity past, formed me positionally as an individual in His mind. He formed me actually (condition), at a later date, in my mother's womb. The Fall did not unmake me as a man, a particular person; my new birth does not unmake me as that man. What is intrinsic to my personhood I never lose; my identity is never changed.

Whatever change I pass through in my new birth as to spirit and soul, whatever change awaits my body at the Rapture, I shall never lose my essential identity with what my Father conceived me to be before the foundation of the world. My crucifixion with the Lord Jesus did not affect my unique identity as newly created in Christ Jesus. Rather, it destroyed positionally all that I was in the fleshly Adam. "Behold, old things are passed away," --positionally.

Romans 6:6 sets forth doctrinally, and positionally, what happened to me as identified with the Lord Jesus in His death unto sin on the Cross. Paul wrote, "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [rendered inoperative], that henceforth we should not serve sin."

I, the old Adamic man, was crucified with Him, that the body of sin (sin in toto) might be destroyed, condemned in death--not forgiven. I the sinful one was condemned in the death of the Cross in order that I might be re-created in the risen life of the Last Adam.

"ONE-NATURISM" -- Before going on with our positional history, we will deal briefly with the "one-nature" error. The teaching of the eradication of the "old man " is centered in a wrong understanding of Romans 6:6, mainly through the influence of Arminian and Covenant theology. Here is where the growing number of those who reject or misunderstand positional truth, have faltered and fallen.

The scriptural context of Romans 6:1-10 is positional, judicial. The "one-nature" teaching views verse 6 as experiential and actual. Hence, it is maintained that the old man is actually crucified and gone--eradicating. Yet this view admits to indwelling sin in the believer. Some say it is a residual influence from the pre-salvation life, along with accumulated habits. Therefore, some advocate the forming of new habits to counteract and replace the old sinful ones. A form of legalism/behaviorism.

Other "one-nature" proponents insist that while the old man is eradicated, and the body of sin actually destroyed, sin remains in the believer. This "energy force" of sin then works through the soul, with the permission of the will. (It seems to be forgotten that the man in Romans Seven was willing with all his might not to sin!) Sin working through the soul and body is referred to as the "condition of flesh."

But the Word teaches that "flesh" is a person, not a condition. "Fathers of our flesh" (Heb. 12: 9) produce progeny of flesh. Belief in the eradication of the old man tends to relieve the Christian of much of his responsibility concerning the activity of his fleshly Adamic life. He is wont to place the blame on Satan, and upon tendencies developed prior to salvation.

This is the crux of the matter: it is not possible for the source of sin (the old man) to be eradicated, while retaining sin itself. Effect must have a cause! If you have sin, you have its source, i.e., the Adamic old man. Paul exhorts the believer to "put off ... the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4: 22). He does not tell the believer to put off what is not in residence!

"He that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John ,5:12). On the other hand, He that hath the Adamic old man, hath sin; he that hath not the Adamic old man, hath not sin.

Back now to our positional history. Positionally freed from the Adamic life through my death unto sin in the Lord Jesus, the Father was at liberty to identify the essential me with His Son, and in His resurrection I was re-created alive unto God in Him. When He arose, "the beginning of the (new) creation of God" (Rev. 3:14), I arose with Him in newness of life--a totally new creation.

When the Lord Jesus, now Head of the new creation, ascended to the right hand of His Father, He took me with Him. The Father, having re-created me in His Son, raised me up together, and made me sit together in heavenly places in Him.

I was separated by death (positionally) from the first Adam to be re-created in union with the Last Adam in His crucifixion, burial, resurrection and ascension. In Him I became a totally new creation. Old Adamic things positionally passed away in the death of Calvary. In my condition, they are passing away as I grow spiritually. Actually, they will totally and eternally pass away at my death or at the Rapture--whichever comes first. Even so, come Lord Jesus!

There I am in my position, "hid with Christ in God." In the Lord Jesus, I am accepted in the Beloved, complete in Him, entirely sanctified in Him, perfect in Him. All of that, and more, has been held in spiritual escrow ever since the One who is my Life ascended to the right hand of the Father. All had to be completed positionally before a single Christian existed, because Christianity is founded upon the finished

work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CONDITION FACTOR -- Born into this world in the life and image of the first Adam, I grew up a condemned sinner, dead in trespasses and sins. In His own time and purpose the Father called me [effectual], and by His grace I responded in faith, responsibly accepting the Lord Jesus as my Saviour. At that moment the Holy Spirit, by His indwelling, brought the life of the Lord Jesus to be my Christian life. Then and there I entered into my position as a new creation in the Last Adam, with my old Adamic life still abiding in my body of mortal flesh. Remove that life and the Adamic body dies, for both unsaved and saved.

In the Spirit's time, I came to realize the positional facts in the Word concerning me. I saw that I had died unto sin at the Cross, crucified with the Lord Jesus. In time I learned not to struggle against the old man within, but to count by faith upon the positional truth of the Cross: I as a new creation had been taken out of the flesh, and been re-created in union with the risen Lord Jesus, seated at the Father's right hand in Glory (Rom. 8:9). Abide above!

As I reckon my new self positionally dead unto sin, the Holy Spirit progressively applies that finished position to my growing condition. I experience step by step the freedom from the reign of indwelling sin that was wrought at Calvary. My condition begins to conform to its source, my position.

Likewise, reckoning upon my position as "alive unto God in Christ Jesus," the Holy Spirit centers my heart and mind upon the One in Glory who is my Christian life. As I behold Him by means of the Word (2 Cor. 3:18), in personal fellowship and worship, the Spirit develops that completed life with ever-increasing growth, slowly conforming me to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the Rapture, I will receive my renewed body, like His glorious body. Then, and not until then, my body of mortal flesh will be instantly transformed into my spiritual body. The old man will finally be eradicated, and I will be in eternal condition what has been my position since my death and resurrection in Him at Calvary--yes, since My Father formed me in His heart in eternity past.

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