

Christ and Adam's Rib

By

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Do you remember the old family album of years ago? That ornate, bulky book full of snapshots and photos of the family, the uncles and aunts, together with notations of special events? In the front of the book was the family data of births and marriages, and tear-stained records of deaths. But the pictures were the things that intrigued us most. Those old tintypes of father and mother in their old-fashioned clothes, grandfather with his long beard, and then the picture of one's self as a baby with a little embroidered jacket and the long, long dress. The pictures were a continued story -- the history of the family.

Now the Bible is such a picture Book. It is a collection of portraits of one supreme Person who overshadows all the rest of the pictures. The central object of this Bible Album is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man. He is the central figure on every page, and the other pictures grouped about Him are added only to bring into bolder relief the loveliness, the superlative beauty, the infinite perfection of the Man of the Book, the Lord Jesus.

On Every Page

The face of Jesus Christ is on every page of Scripture, Every single incident recorded in the Word, in some way, directly or indirectly, has some connection with God's revelation concerning Him. This our Lord Jesus Himself taught when He spoke to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus on that first resurrection day. These disciples were returning from Jerusalem, sad and depressed because their Lord had been crucified. Jesus joined them and inquired into the cause of their sadness, and then astonished them with the statement that all this had been foretold in the Bible. If they had only known the Scriptures they would not have been sad but rejoicing. Listen to His words of loving rebuke:

*... O fools, and slow of heart to believe **all** that the prophets have spoken:*

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? (Luke 24:25,26).

And then after this rebuke for their tragic neglect to believe all the Scriptures, we read the amazing statement of our text:

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:21).

Jesus says that *all* the Scriptures speak of Him. Now the Scriptures to which Jesus referred were the Old Testament. Not a single line of the New Testament had as yet been written when He spoke these words. It is of the Old Testament Jesus declares that they *all* speak of Him. The Old

Testament, therefore, is not primarily an account of creation, the history of the Hebrew nation, or a collection of moral, religious and ethical instructions, but it is a *revelation of Jesus Christ*.

TRANSFORMS THE BIBLE

Once we realize that the Old Testament is a revelation of the Lord Jesus, and we must find Him somewhere on every page, the study of the Old Testament will be transformed from a dull and wearing task, to a thrilling, exciting exercise as we look for *His face*, hidden among the incidents recorded in the Book. This is what Jesus meant when He said,

Search the scriptures;... they are they which testify of me (John 5:39).

PICTURES OF THE CHRIST

In the succeeding chapters we shall seek to point out a few of the innumerable portraits of die Lord Jesus in the Old Testament, with the fervent: prayer that it may stimulate you to find for yourself new and precious visions of His glory. Our Lord said to the disciples on the road to Emmaus that all the Scriptures, beginning with Moses, spoke of Him. So we turn to the first few pages" of our picture album, the books of Moses. The reference is to the first five books of the Bible written by Moses, which are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The picture album of the Old Testament has thirty-nine pages, and on every page we may find portraits, pen sketches, profiles, full length portraits, and candid camera shots of this Altogether Lovely One.

PAGE NUMRER ONE

Page number one in our album is the Book of Genesis. Most people associate Genesis with the record of creation and the early history of the human race. But this is only secondary. The primary purpose of Genesis is to introduce to us the Lord Jesus. Before we take up a few of these portraits, let me say that without the New Testament it would be impossible to see these wonderful revelations of Christ.

They are in miniature, and with the naked eye we can behold only the dimmest outlines. But now comes the New Testament and illumines and magnifies these portraits until all is clear. You remember the hours we spent as children looking through a stereopticon at slides of some of the wonders of the world. We called it a magic lantern because when we mounted two pictures and then looked at them through the binoculars, the two pictures blended into one, bringing out all the details in bold and clear relief. Today we, of course, have greatly improved upon this by small colored slides and a projector which greatly magnifies the otherwise dim and undistinguishable outlines and throws them clearly on the screen.

Such is the relationship of the Old and the New Testament. The Old Testament is an album of slides, painted by the Holy Spirit, but they can only be fully understood and appreciated as we view them in the light of the New Testament which is the magic lantern through which we see the infinite beauties of the Lord Jesus in the Old.

MANY PICTURES

In the previous chapter we pointed out that the very first sentence in the Bible is a picture of Jesus Christ. It will bear repeating. The opening verse is:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1).

This is a picture of the Lord Jesus, but we could never recognize it as such until we look at it through the magic lantern of the New Testament. And when we do that, we see Him, for John says:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:1-3).

The picture is clear. The first portrait on page one of God's Album is a picture of Christ the Creator of all things. And now we can go on to the next photo. It is a picture of darkness and gloom, destruction and chaos. It is an earth without form and void, upon which the Spirit of God began to move in preparation for the next act in creation.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light (Genesis 1:3).

That is the picture, and as we set it in the frame and look at it in the light of God's full revelation, we see Jesus. He is the Light of the world. John says:

In him [Jesus] was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1:4).

And Jesus Himself declares, at the healing of the blind man,

... I am the light of the world (John 9:5).

... I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness (John 12:46).

The rest of the record of the seven days of creation is but an expansion of the work of the Lord Jesus. The second day of creation, God separated the waters on earth from those in the heavens. Jesus, the Light of the World, is the Great Separator between the things of earth and the things of heaven. The presence of light attracts and awakens some, but repels and drives away others. At sunrise the birds and animals of the day awaken with song, but the same sunlight causes the unclean owls and bats and bloodthirsty beasts to seek cover under darkness. And so in the separation of the waters as the result of the light we see a picture of the work of Jesus Christ. John says:

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God (John 3:19-21).

We can find Christ in every other day of creation, until it consummates in the creation of man in the image of God. Adam is a picture of Christ and He is called in the Bible the "second man" (I Corinthians 15:47), and the "last Adam" (I Corinthians 15:45). Many men in the Scriptures are types of the Lord Jesus, such as Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, and many others, but very few ever think of Adam as a type and portrait of the Lord Jesus. We shall have occasion to point this out in detail in a later chapter, but right here let me call your attention to one superlatively beautiful picture. It is the creation of Eve as the wife of Adam. God "caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he [God] took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof" (Genesis 2:21).

While Adam slept, God created from his wounded side, a wife, who was part of himself, and he paid for her by the shedding of blood. And after Adam awoke he said:

... This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Genesis 2:23, 24).

THE DIM PICTURE

There is the slide, but we will never know its meaning until we behold it through the binoculars of the New Testament. Then we stand breathless with wonder, awe, and adoration at its beauty, and prostrate ourselves in adoration before *Him*, the *last Adam*, the *Man of the glory*. Let the Apostle Paul turn on the magic lantern for us. He snaps it on in Ephesians 5, among many other places. Speaking of the union of believers in Christ he says:

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones (Ephesians 5:30).

This is a direct reference to the words of Adam when he said, "she is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." And then Paul quotes from Genesis, and says:

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31,32).

Now all is clear. Adam is a picture of the Lord Jesus, who left His Father's house to gain His bride at the price of His own life. Jesus, the last Adam, like the first, must be put to sleep to purchase His Bride, the Church, and Jesus died on the cross and slept in the tomb for three days and three nights. His side too was opened after He had fallen asleep, and from that wounded side redemption flowed. I believe that in the creation of Eve, Adam gave his literal blood.

God opened his side and this implies a wound and bloodshedding. Here then at the very dawn of creation, even before man had fallen, we have an implied reference to a new creature taken from the side of a man and becoming a part of him, even of his flesh, and of his bones.

FULFILLED IN CHRIST

The Church, which is His body, was also purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ. It meant His death, asleep for three days and three nights. His side too was opened, and the cleansing water and His justifying blood flowed forth. The Church, like Eve, was a new creation, not by a natural birth, but by a supernatural operation of God, and this "rib" was builded into a woman who was to become the helpmeet and bride of the husband. How long a time elapsed between the "operation" on Adam's side, and the completion of the task of building the rib into a wife we are not told, but it is implied that there was a period of time between the removal of the rib, and the completion of Eve and her presentation to Adam. There are two steps clearly indicated:

1. The operation-God "took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof."
2. God brought her unto the man.

Between these two steps is the record, "And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman." And when the building of the woman was complete He brought the man and the "rib" back together. The word translated "made" in our Scripture in the original is *bannah*, and occurs scores of times in the rest of the Bible, but only in this passage and in Ezekiel 27:5 is it translated "made." In all the other places it is translated "build." So the verse could read, "And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made (*builded*) he into a woman." How long it took to *build* the woman we do not know, but God separated the man from the rib until the building was done and then He "brought her unto the man."

This is the picture of our great Redeemer as seen on page one of God's picture Album. Jesus died on the cross, His side was opened, and by the Holy Spirit today a Bride is being prepared, and when the last member has been added He will bring her unto the man Christ Jesus. God has been "building" this precious Bride, purchased by His blood, for the past nineteen hundred years, and soon she will be presented to her Lord. That will be the consummation. Paul says that,

... Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27).

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32).