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## Jesus Christ - the Promised King

Having introduced us to Abraham and David the apostle Paul now writes about Adam. In particular he contrasts his failure in Eden with the success of the Lord Jesus Christ. His argument is all about rulership and dominion. It leads naturally on from what he has said about the promises made to Abraham and David and the need for people to believe them and live accordingly. We must all trust in God if we are to be delivered from sin and death. But why did it all go wrong and how can it be put right?

### ❖ Where Adam Failed

If we approach Romans chapter 5, as we have looked at previous chapters - by analysing exactly what Paul says, thinking about it and then looking at other Scriptures for help and further guidance - we shall have a useful starting point. You might want to try that exercise yourself and then see how your findings compare with those listed below.

Paul goes right back to the start of God's dealings with mankind and makes this diagnosis of the underlying sickness which afflicts us all. This is what he says about Adam's failure and its results:

- ✓ *"Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12);*
- ✓ *"Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam" (5:14);*
- ✓ *"Many died through one man's trespass ...the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation" (5:15,16);*
- ✓ *"Because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man" (5:17);*

- ✓ *"One trespass led to condemnation for all men" (5:18);*
- ✓ *"By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (5:19);*
- ✓ *"Sin reigned in death" (5:21).*

The key point here is that Adam was given the opportunity to keep God's law - not to eat of the forbidden fruit - and he chose to disobey. Or, to express it in a different way, he was given the opportunity to *conquer* those desires and to *rule* over his wrong thoughts, but he gave in to the temptation and was conquered by desire instead. Notice that Paul uses the language of rulership when he says that: *"Death reigned from Adam to Moses", "death reigned through that one man" and "Sin reigned in death".*

In Paul's analysis, sin and death got the upper hand and men and women have become subjects or slaves in the kingdom of sin and death. Notice the terminology, which is very significant. Paul does not talk about the Devil or Satan taking control - he talks about the problem of sin and death. We will look at the subject of the Devil and Satan in a later chapter.<sup>1</sup> For the moment we need to understand exactly what point the apostle is making.

### ❖ The Kingdom in Eden

God created Adam and Eve and settled them into an ideal environment, where everything was *"very good"* (Genesis 1:31). It wasn't perfect because that term would imply that nothing could ever go wrong. God wanted them to have the opportunity to choose between right and wrong. This gave them a way in which they could, if they wished, show their appreciation of all that God had given them and demonstrate their love for Him, if that was how they felt about their Creator. So God asked them to live faithfully. He told them that disobedience would bring severe consequences and invited them to take charge of His world by first ruling over themselves and their desires. They were to have dominion and thus rule as king and queen over God's new world:

*"God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the live-*

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 24.

*stock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps 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. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and **subdue it and have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (Genesis 1:26-28).*

God made them in His image, a term which does not mean physical resemblance, for there are physical differences between men and women. Being made in the divine likeness meant that they were able to reflect the very characteristics of God Himself and of the angels that lived with Him. They could become a godly man and woman.

But first they had to “*have dominion*” and “*subdue*” any thoughts or desires that might be put to them. In the state in which they had been created no such thoughts were likely to occur to them from within<sup>2</sup>, so God made and then introduced a creature that might have such thoughts. He was different from the other creatures God had made, for he had animal cunning in abundance.

### ❖ Enter the Serpent!

The inspired record says this about the creature: “*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made*” (Genesis 3:1).<sup>3</sup> The serpent became a tempter in this ideal garden setting. It suggested to Eve that God had not really meant what He said about the forbidden fruit, but that it might benefit them: “*God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*” (3:5). That suggestion awakened desire in Eve that had not been there before. She looked, liked what she saw, wanted it and wanted the wisdom that it might bring, so she took the

<sup>2</sup> Now it is natural for us to think evil thoughts (see Mark 7:21), but that verse describes our situation after the fall of man. Adam and Eve were created “very good” and they would have had no such inner tendencies at the time.

<sup>3</sup> Because the record says that the serpent was made “more crafty” than the beasts of the field, we can deduce that he had more than his share of what we now call “animal cunning”. He was a very perceptive beast and he took his natural characteristics too far, in that he even questioned what God had said. Notice that he was a beast of the field, not a supernatural being.

fruit and ate it.

In the New Testament the apostle Paul confirms what is apparent from the Genesis record – that Eve was deceived by the serpent’s suggestions and did not fully realise what she was doing when she ate the fruit (1 Timothy 2:14). In that very verse, he also explained that Adam was not deceived. When Eve offered the fruit to Adam he knew exactly what the choice was: to obey God or to disobey Him. He chose to disobey, perhaps so that he would not be separated from Eve. If so it was an act of love towards her, it was an act which showed that Adam’s love for Eve was greater than his love for God.

All three of the culprits were held accountable – the serpent as well. Any idea that the serpent was not really a creature, or that it is another way of describing a supernatural devil, or Satan, quite clearly fails.<sup>4</sup> God regarded the serpent as responsible for challenging His commandment and for tempting the woman to disobey:

*“Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. **I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel**” (Genesis 3:14,15).*

### ❖ Eve’s Special Offspring

The sentence that God passed on the serpent meant that all its natural offspring, whether serpents or snakes, would in future slither on their bellies. In doing so they would be crawling in the dust of the earth and there is a spiritual lesson to be learned from this. The serpent was the first being to challenge the truth of God’s Word and to question His law. So the Bible makes the serpent an example or a symbol of all those in later times who would also question

<sup>4</sup> There is no reference to either the Devil or Satan in any of the first five books of the Bible. The earliest occurrence of that terminology is in the Book of Job. The subject as a whole is considered in Chapter 24.



what God has said.<sup>5</sup>

Eve, however, was to have one special descendant - someone who would be born of a woman but who would not have a human father. The Bible describes the coming child very carefully as "her offspring" (Genesis 3:15) and people might have wondered just how that could be. How could a child be born without a human father? It required a miracle for that to happen for God was to be the Father and Mary (descended from Eve) would be the mother. Through Mary, Jesus would inherit all the characteristics of the human race. He would be born mortal and would feel just like us, including being tempted just as we are.

This prediction - about the woman's offspring - is the very first promise of the gospel. It is perfectly in line with what was later promised to Abraham and David about a special offspring who would be born to their family. The offspring would be the Lord Jesus Christ. Here the three

<b>Gospel Promise</b>	
<b>Eve</b>	"I will put enmity between you [serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15);
<b>Abraham</b>	"Your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:17, 18);
<b>David</b>	"I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son" (2 Samuel 7:12-14).

<sup>5</sup> In the New Testament, the opponents of John the Baptist and of Jesus are described respectively as "vipers" (Matthew 3:7), "serpents" and a "brood of vipers" (Matthew 23:33).

promises are shown side-by-side:

All these promises are about rulership and dominion. Eve was promised that one would come - the offspring of a woman - who would crush to death all things that oppose God and are contrary to His will. But the promised one would be bruised in the process. That's something that both Old and New Testaments comment on as God's purpose unfolds:

*"When the fullness of time had come, **God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons**" (Galatians 4:4,5);*

*"**He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed**" (Isaiah 53:5);*

*"Such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. **The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet**" (Romans 16:18-20).*

In that last passage the apostle Paul is evidently looking back to what happened in Eden, when the serpent deceived Eve with "smooth talk". He assures his readers that all such deception will end when the opponents of God are crushed under their feet, when all the present wrongs are put right.<sup>6</sup>

❖ **Absolute Self-Control**

Jesus was completely dominant over self and selfish desire; there was never a time when he lost control or when he allowed wrong thinking or foolish desire to get the upper hand. His obedience to the will of God His Father was absolutely outstanding. Whatever his nature prompted him

<sup>6</sup> When Jesus was confronted by opponents and deceivers during his preaching work - people who were acting like serpents and vipers - he was always able to get the better of them in discussion. (See, for example, Matthew 22:23-33.) This was a foretaste of how things will be when Jesus returns to subdue all his enemies (see Psalm 2:9-12).

to do, and he had exactly the same feelings that we have, he never once yielded to those inner desires. He had come to do His Father's will and, as we saw, he did so perfectly.<sup>7</sup> He was obedient, where Adam was not and, faced with much greater temptations than those which Adam faced,

Adam	Jesus
"many died through one man's trespass"	<i>"much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many" (5:15)</i>
<i>"the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation"</i>	<i>"the free gift following many trespasses brought justification" (5:16)</i>
<i>"because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man"</i>	<i>"much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ" (5:17)</i>
<i>"one trespass led to condemnation for all men"</i>	<i>"one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men" (5:18)</i>
<i>"as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners"</i>	<i>"by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (5:19)</i>
<i>"as sin reigned in death..."</i>	<i>"... grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (5:21)</i>

Jesus prevailed.

This obedience was a vital part of God's purpose. The consequences of Adam's sin could only be reversed by a man who showed perfect obedience to God's commandments. Paul highlights that comparison in Romans chapter 5, where the differences between Adam and Jesus stand

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 7 pages 89-95

out clearly.

Where Adam failed the Lord Jesus Christ succeeded and what Adam lost the Lord regained, both for himself and for all his followers. Adam's life could be summed up as one of trespass, disobedience, condemnation and death. That of Jesus was one of obedience, righteousness, grace and life. The one lost control of himself and with it the prospect of ruling over God's creation; the other gained control and was given that dominion by God. Adam was deposed and evicted from God's presence, but Jesus was exalted and enthroned. This comparison is in Paul's mind when he says this of the differences between Adam and Jesus, both of whom were God's special creation:

*"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).*

Notice the careful comparisons made between Adam and the Lord Jesus:

- Both were "in the form of God", made in His image;
- Adam wanted to be equal with God; Jesus had no such aspirations - he just wanted to do his Father's will, first and foremost;
- Both were born in "human form"<sup>8</sup> and came to a personal realisation that God had created them and that He wanted something of them;<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> It is a very important New Testament teaching that Jesus shared the same nature that we possess. He came "in the flesh" (1 John 4:2) and had the very same nature that we share (Hebrews 2:14).

<sup>9</sup> See Psalm 40:7-8.

- ✚ Adam exalted himself – by putting self first – and was abased by God. Jesus humbled himself – by putting God’s will uppermost at all times – and he was exalted by God;
- ✚ Adam was disobedient in one thing – he ate the forbidden fruit; Jesus was obedient unto death, “even death on a cross” – an act of supreme self-sacrifice;
- ✚ Adam was banished from the place where he should have had dominion – he lost his kingdom. Jesus was highly exalted by God because of his obedience and now we should bow the knee before him. Shortly everyone in both heaven and earth will acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as King, “to the glory of God the Father”.

### ❖ Jesus Christ the King

This passage of Scripture, with its careful and deliberate contrast between Adam and Jesus, explains that Jesus is the successor to Adam, and there are several others which make the same point. Sometimes the contrast is quite subtle; you have to be looking for it. The Bible often functions at that level, by giving little pointers in the right direction, but expecting us to be alert to its indications. This is why we can find new things as we read it time and time again and it is one of the reasons why the Bible is such a fascinating book. Here are a couple of examples where you can see the contrast for yourself:

*“I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. He shall cry to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.’ And **I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him. I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens**” (Psalm 89:23-29);*

*“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or*

*dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. And **he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent**” (Colossians 1:15-18).*

In both these passages Jesus is described as God’s “firstborn”, a term that means the one who is pre-eminent or exalted above all. It does not describe the time when he was born, but the position to which God has exalted him. It is true that Jesus was the first person ever to rise from the dead to an endless life and in that sense he is the first in time as well. But the key point being made, when Jesus is spoken of as “firstborn,” is that he is above and beyond all others in the purpose of God.<sup>10</sup>

Jesus came into existence when he was born of Mary in Bethlehem, for he was the offspring of the woman as well as Son of God. Both Mary and Almighty God contributed something to his make-up, just as both our parents make us the unique people we are. Jesus inherited characteristics from both his Father and mother. As we have seen before,<sup>11</sup> the marvellous thing is that Jesus completely subjected and controlled those human tendencies he inherited from his mother and lived to do his Father’s will. That was the great victory he accomplished and that is the way in which he reigned over sin, in the flesh, and overcame its power and allure. Nobody has ever done that either before or after Jesus. It is the hallmark of his great victory over sin and wickedness, in all its forms.

### ❖ Jesus Christ Above All

Once we realise that Jesus is pre-eminent in the purpose of God, lots of other Scriptures fit into place. From the moment that Adam sinned, God began to implement His plan to recover and restore mankind. He knows everything. So God knew that man would sin and had already decided how He would restore the position. He would intervene to rescue mankind. The birth and destiny of His Son was known about from the time of Creation; that’s how things

<sup>10</sup> One of the clearest verses to establish this is Psalm 89:27, where God says of the coming King, descended from David’s line: “And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth”.

<sup>11</sup> Chapter 7, pages 89-95.

are with God! The marvel of it all is that He was still prepared to go ahead with Creation, knowing what would be involved for Him and for His Son. He did so because He loves mankind and wants men and women to find true happiness and fulfilment.

Adam and Eve were quite changed by their experience of rebellion and disobedience and their previous harmonious existence was shattered. The record says of them that: *“the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths”* (Genesis 3:7). When challenged about their wrongdoing Adam and Eve set about blaming each other, and must have looked a sorry pair in their fig-leaf outfits.

God took pity on them and made them a proper covering, one that required the sacrifice of an animal, or animals.<sup>12</sup> In this way He demonstrated that the proper covering for sin, one that was acceptable in His sight, would require a sacrifice for sin. Jesus was already in His mind, for the inspired record says of the Lord Jesus Christ that he was *“the Lamb that was slain”* (Revelation 13:8) and *“the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29).

### ❖ Did Jesus Pre-Exist?

There are several other Scriptures some people use to suggest that Jesus existed with God from the beginning of creation. Properly understood they actually teach that Jesus was:

- ✓ In the mind of God from the beginning, and
- ✓ Supreme above all others in the purpose and love of God.

Here are a few of those passages, with some explanatory comment where necessary:

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<sup>12</sup> *“the LORD God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them”* (Genesis 3:21).

*“In the beginning was the Word,<sup>13</sup> and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:1-3,14).

The apostle John often uses language like this to describe the plan and purpose of God. He calls this purpose *“the Word”*. This purpose, which was in the mind of God, is pictured for us as though it were a person. The Old Testament often uses figurative language to describe the purpose or the wisdom of God (see, for example, Proverbs 8:12-31 or Psalm 147:15). It's a figure of speech known as *‘personification’* - when an abstract idea, like wisdom, is pictured as though it were a person. That is what the Scriptures employ here to make the plan of God that much more vivid.

God had a plan in mind, says John, and His all-powerful Word was ready for action, as once it had been when He created the world. This time, however, it was a new creation that God brought into existence - *“the only Son from the Father”* (John 1:14), a phrase which is also translated as *“the only begotten of the Father”*. Some other expressions by John in his gospel account harmonise with this use of language, for John records these words of Jesus, who had come to make a new start possible between God and mankind:

*“God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him”* (John 3:16,17);

*“He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives*

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<sup>13</sup> Note that John does not say *“In the beginning was Jesus”*. His teaching is that from the very beginning God had a purpose in mind, for the Greek word *“logos”* (here translated *“Word”*) has that very idea. The Greeks thought that the *‘logos’* was the very plan and purpose behind everything, and John says that it was God's plan.

*his testimony. Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand” (3:31-35);*

*“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (6:51);*

*“He said to them, ‘You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world ...When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him’” (8:23,28-29);*

*“The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father” (16:27,28).*

The key teaching in all these verses is that Jesus did not choose to come because he was already living in heaven and God sent him down to the earth. He came into existence by an act of God when he was born by the operation of God’s Holy Spirit power. That was a direct result of divine action and intervention; and he had come to do his Father’s will, to speak His words, to perform His acts and to demonstrate His power at work.

Jesus was sent by God, in just the same way that God sent John the Baptist: *“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John” (John 1:6)*. This does not mean that John the Baptist had lived in heaven before he was born on earth, but that he was someone who was sent by God to do a particular task. God initiated his work, then caused him to be born on earth (to aged parents), so that he could go and proclaim the coming of Jesus.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> You can read about the birth of John the Baptist in chapter 1 of Luke’s account of the gospel.

One further example may help. When Jesus said: *“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (6:51)*, he likened his coming to the provision of manna in the wilderness (see John 6:31).<sup>15</sup> God, not Moses, had fed the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai by providing manna, which had formed upon the ground like frost (Exodus 16:14). This was not bread which literally descended from heaven. It originated in heaven because God caused it to be formed on earth, and God is in heaven. In just the same way, Jesus was formed on earth when God caused him to be born of Mary. He did not physically descend from heaven but, like the manna, he came into existence on earth when God made that happen (see Luke 1:35).

Everything Jesus would do was known about in advance by God, who knows all, even before a thing happens.<sup>16</sup> In what he said, Jesus was therefore taking no note of his own achievements and accomplishments; instead he was magnifying his Father. Make no mistake! If God had not taken the initiative and had caused him to be born, there would have been no Jesus.

### ❖ Father and Son at Work

John records many of the sayings of Jesus about the unity of purpose that existed between himself and His Father. They were working together for our salvation, but always it was the Father’s work and purpose that was being done.

*“Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I am working.’ This was why the Jews were*

<sup>15</sup> *“Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Jesus then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ They said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life’” (John 6:31-35).*

<sup>16</sup> *God knows everything in advance. Thus he could say to the prophet Jeremiah: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5)..This does not mean that Jeremiah was living in heaven before being born, but that God had a purpose he was to fulfil and that had been formed before even the prophet was born.*

seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:17);

**"We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work"** (9:4);

**"The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.** Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves" (14:10,11);

**"The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me,** but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. **My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all,** and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **I and the Father are one"** (10:25-30).<sup>17</sup>

This joint enterprise was misunderstood by those who heard Jesus, just as it is sometimes misunderstood today. Jesus continually deferred to his Father, and he explained over and over that he was not acting on his own authority, or doing things by himself. He was using the power that God had given him, and was working together with his heavenly Father. Yet, perversely, his opponents saw his actions as a claim to equality with God.

### ❖ Unity or Trinity?

Nowadays there are people who look at these very verses and consider that Jesus was equal with his Father – 'one and indivisible' as the Doctrine of the Trinity puts it – and they see these verses as proof that Jesus was claiming to be part of a triune godhead. The man-made notion of a Trinity is completely non-Biblical and gives quite the wrong

<sup>17</sup> This was a passage we looked at in Question 8.1. See page 456 (Answers). We saw that the oneness of Jesus with his Father was one of purpose and intention; he was one with his Father in the work he had come to do and wanted his followers to share the same aims and ambitions in life (John 17:20-21).

understanding of what Father and Son accomplished together.

- ✦ *The Language is unscriptural. The word "Trinity" never appears in the Bible, far less phrases like "one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity ... confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance ... the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal ... The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate: and the Holy Ghost uncreate", and so on.*
- ✦ *Such language comes from the Athanasian Creed which was formulated in a church council during the fourth or fifth century after Christ – that's 200-300 years after the New Testament was completed.*
- ✦ *This formula ignores what we have found to be the crucial comparison between Jesus and his predecessor Adam. It was vital that as a man had brought about the problem facing mankind, a man had to bring about the solution, albeit a man who was working in perfect harmony with his heavenly Father.*

### ❖ Adam and Jesus

We will give the last word in this chapter to the apostle Paul, who showed, in Romans chapter 5, the contrast between Adam's dismal failure and the glorious success of the Lord Jesus Christ. He makes that comparison again in another of his letters, chapter 15 of the First Letter to the Corinthians; and as he does so he tells us more about the nature and work of Jesus. Here are the key verses, though you may want to read the whole chapter to follow his entire argument:

*"Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. **For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For 'God has put all***



**things in subjection under his feet.**’ But when it says, ‘all things are put in subjection,’ it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:20-28);

“Thus it is written, **The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.** But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. **The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.** As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. **Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven**” (15:45-49).

These are the points the inspired apostle makes here:

- ✓ Adam brought death to all. Those who are descended from him are mortal, and have nothing immortal about them. We are born “in Adam”, as Paul expresses it.
- ✓ Jesus brings life for all those who are reborn of him – who are “in Christ”.
- ✓ That life will come when Jesus comes again – “at his coming”, when he will rule for God and will destroy “every rule and every authority and power” which opposes God, just as Adam should have done.
- ✓ Jesus will then reverse the death sentence that now prevails and will destroy death by conferring eternal life on those who are the subjects of his kingdom.
- ✓ When, by his kingly rule, Jesus has subdued all opposition, he will hand over the rulership of that kingdom to his Father, “that God may be all in all”, or ‘everything to everyone’ as one translation renders the Greek words.
- ✓ Adam lived for himself. Jesus will give life to others.

- ✓ Adam was made from dust and filled his mind with earthly things; Jesus put aside all such earthly things and filled his mind with heavenly thoughts.
- ✓ We have been made in Adam’s image and have been subject to all the problems that result. Being mortal we die and being prone to sin we too fall. We shall however be made in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ when he gives us the gift of eternal life.

This analysis raises issues we have not yet considered, but the Bible works like that. One passage confirms things we have already come across but also tells us new things. In this way it enlarges our understanding and encourages us to read and find out yet more about the purpose of God – the coming of Jesus; the Kingdom over which he will reign and the resurrection of the dead. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is all about that – and the way in which we can become like Jesus, to “share his image” as Paul expresses it.

All that will come if we follow the apostle Paul’s reasoned explanation in Romans as we have been doing. He is unfolding the gospel for us, in his own way, and there are other vital topics that he deals with first. God has a gracious purpose for mankind which is centred in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people will benefit enormously from that purpose, but who and why? How can God forgive some people their sins, give them eternal life and make them like the Lord Jesus Christ?

Understanding that is our next challenge.

## Things to Read

- 📖 If you are not familiar with what happened in the Garden of Eden then Genesis chapter 3 is a really helpful chapter to read.
- 📖 1 Corinthians chapter 15 gives a slightly different comparison between Adam and Jesus from that in Romans chapter 5, as we have seen. It’s all about the hope of resurrection from the dead and makes encouraging reading, for it gives us real hope of life after death.

## Questions to Think About

- 12.1 Put in your own words, in just two or three sentences, just what Paul is saying in Romans chapter 5 about Adam's failure and Jesus' success. Why does it matter so much to us?
- 12.2 Why is it so important that Jesus was descended from Mary, rather than having lived in heaven before being conveyed somehow to earth?



*“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus”*  
*(2 Timothy 3:14, 15)*