

Identity & Adam

We all have an identity. It is inescapable and undeniable. We are the children of someone. We are all citizens of a country. We live in a location. We work some place, or don't. We've all been to school. We all speak a language.

What is also true and inescapable is that we all have an identity problem. These days, when we think of an identity problem, we think of identity theft. That's when people steal other people's credit card and social security information and then turn around to use them as though they were that person. Unless you are in that situation you probably don't know what I'm talking about when I say that we all have an identity problem.

What I mean is that some of us have way too much security in our identities and others of us don't have enough security in our identities. For those of you that think you have a problem, I can prove it. Most of us, if not all of us, identify ourselves as Americans, citizens of the United States. What if I told you that your citizenship had been dissolved and you had to live in another country, in another culture? Could you hand that? Or, what if I told you that you could be like anyone? Would you still want to be like you, with your parents, your siblings, your job, your house or apartment, your intelligence? Or would you want to upgrade?

The story of the Bible can be understood as the story of 2 major identities: the identity of Adam and the identity of Israel. The story has a sourness because Adam and Israel both had an identity problem. Adam was not secure enough with his identity and he wanted to upgrade. Israel was way too secure in their identity and took it for granted. The Gospel is the sweetness that Jesus Christ solves and fixes the identity problem with Adam and Israel. How so? Jesus identified with Adam and became a New Adam, and he identified with Israel and became a New Israel. As a New Adam and a New Israel, Jesus suffered for those in Adam and those in Israel so that they could have their security in His identity. That is what we will be looking at the next 4 weeks.

I. The Identity of Adam

Genesis 1 is the account of the creation of the world in which God creates the world in 6 days. These 6 days have a certain rhythm that highlights a kingdom/king structure. God created Adam as the pinnacle of creation (Genesis 1:26-28).

*Then 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 livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man **in his own image, in the image of God** he created him; male and female he created them. 28 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."*

As the last creature created by God, man was to be the most precious of his creation. It is clear from Adam being created “in the image of God” that God created Adam to resemble God, to be like God, to imitate God. This passage here indicates that the chief way that Adam would imitate God is by ruling and being king of the earth. You can see this from statements like “let them have dominion” and “fill the earth and subdue it”. This is kingly, ruling language reflects that God is the ruler of the heaven and the universe. If God is ruling heaven and the universe, then Adam is ruling the earth under God. If they are co-ruling, then what kind of relationship do they have, what is Adam’s identity? Genesis 5:1-3 tells us that this is a Father/Son relationship:

*This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, **he made him in the likeness of God.** 2 Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. 3 When Adam had lived 130 years, **he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.***

Now, where will this kingdom for God’s Son, Adam begin? From where will he rule? Genesis 2:8-9 has the answer for us:

*8 And the LORD God planted a garden in **Eden**, in the east, and there **he put the man whom he had formed.** 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The **tree of life** was in the midst of the garden, and the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil.***

How should Adam rule, what should he do? Genesis 2:15-17 has the answer:

*15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden **to work it and guard it.** 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil** you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**"*

In the garden, God tested Adam’s identity. God tells him to rule Eden like he rules heaven. God cultivates heaven and guards it from enemies. God proved this when he casted Satan out of heaven. Therefore, God calls for Adam and “to work” the land (cultivate it) and “to guard” the garden (protect it). That is what is meant by “to work it and guard it”. As we find out in Genesis 3, the Serpent (Satan) planned an invasion of the garden. What should have Adam and Eve done? They should have judged the Serpent and casted him out of the garden. If they would continue to cultivate and protect the garden, be fruitful and have children, then the garden would eventually cover the whole earth. They would have a world-wide kingdom.

II. Adam’s Identity Forfeited

As we all know, Genesis 3 recounts that Adam failed to guard the garden, thus displaying that he is not like God and revealed Adam’s true identity. But notice the appeal that the Serpent lays on Eve (vs. 4-5):

*But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil."*

The Serpent appealed to them by saying that they will be like God if they eat from the tree. He wanted Adam and Eve to go rogue and create their own identities independent of God. "You guys need an upgrade; you're not going anywhere with that identity." He questions the goodness of God and accuses him of jealousy instead of generosity. But the opposite is true! God created them for the specific purpose of being like Him and told them how to do it. God does not hold back on his Sons. Unfortunately, the unthinkable happens:

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired **to make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (**Genesis 3:6-7**)*

What Adam and Eve didn't realize when they sinned is that they were imitating the Serpent and they became subject to him – they did his will, they took on his identity. They joined the cosmic rebellion against God and plunged their offspring (children) into rebellion. Therefore, as Paul puts it in Ephesians, Adam and his offspring have become children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2). Adam and Eve forfeited their sonship identity in God and became sons of the Serpent. In so doing, they also forfeited their kingdom to the Serpent. The world is now Satan's to rule and have dominion.

What Adam and Eve also didn't realize when they looked to upgrade their identity, was that there was no upgrade possible. They already had the highest identity that they could have. Satan was holding out a carrot on a stick.

When God intervenes, he has to do the job that Adam failed to do. But instead of casting out only the Serpent (Satan), God banishes Adam and Eve from the garden and he guards the way back (**Genesis 3:22-24**):

*Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever--" 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the **tree of life**.*

III. Adam's Identity Restored

But before we get to the exile of Adam and Eve with Satan, God moved in the first major promise of the Gospel. God stepped in to judge the Serpent, as only He can do, and in so doing promised to restore Adam/Eve. From what we know of the whole Bible, we can say that God himself would come in the flesh as their Offspring of Adam and Eve in

order to crush the Serpent. He will ultimately take back dominion of the world (**Genesis 3:15**):

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 3:15 Promise	
Enmity between You (the serpent)	The Women (Eve)
Your Offspring (unbelievers)	Her Offspring (believers)
You (serpent) shall bruise his (male child's) heal	He (male child) will crush your (serpent's) head

Before God casted Adam and Eve out of the garden, he does the unthinkable. He adopts them to be His sons again:

*And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife **garments** of skins and clothed them. (**Genesis 3:21**)*

God gave them garments as a symbol, a gesture that they have become heirs of His kingdom once again. It's not they were naked, they had already made clothing for themselves. Clothing was symbolic in the ancient world for heirship (Joseph, Prodigal Son). God was choosing to identify with Adam and Eve again even though they foolishly looked for an upgrade which didn't exist.

Adam Identity: Made in the image/likeness of God, the Son of God, King of the Earth

