



THE UNFOLDING
MYSTERY

DISCOVERING CHRIST
IN THE
OLD TESTAMENT

EDMUND P. CLOWNEY

25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

If you want to discover *the* story line that drives all the stories of the Bible and if you want that story to change you, you should read *The Unfolding Mystery*. Edmund Clowney brings to these pages an artist's zeal for coherent beauty together with a pastor-scholar's love for Jesus Christ. Read this book with some friends, taking time to discuss the questions at the end of each chapter. By all means give it to your pastor. If he cannot preach Christ from the Old Testament, he should not be in the pulpit.

—**Charles Drew**, Senior Minister, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, Manhattan; Author of *The Ancient Love Song: Finding Christ in the Old Testament*

Edmund Clowney was the master of rich, heartwarming, doxological preaching, showing us that Christ is indeed the central theme of all the Scriptures. This wonderful book is both a fitting legacy for him and an inspiring introduction to his work for a new generation of Christians.

—**Iain M. Duguid**, Professor of Biblical and Religious Studies, Grove City College, Grove City, Pennsylvania

Many Christians, particularly Protestants, functionally believe that the New Testament is the real Bible. They may hesitantly add the book of Psalms. In *The Unfolding Mystery*, Edmund Clowney shows us how impoverished a view of the Bible this is; indeed, how impoverished a view of Christ himself this is. For Christ was not only foretold in the Old Testament but is woven into its entire fabric. There would have been no Messiah, no Son of God, no unique way, truth, and life, in the New Testament without all that transpired in the Old. In this volume, Dr. Clowney presents Jesus Christ eloquently, even passionately, as the savior of sinners, their defender and

friend. This is a book to be read slowly, for it contains countless treasures and spiritual insights.

—**William Edgar**, Professor of Apologetics, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

On the trek from Jerusalem to Emmaus, two downcast disciples found their broken hearts transformed into burning hearts, as the Stranger showed them in Israel's Scriptures God's plan for his beloved Christ to pass through suffering into glory, redeeming his people. Over the last quarter century, Edmund Clowney's *Unfolding Mystery* has guided thousands of readers along the same path through the Old Testament on which Jesus led those two, replacing shattered dreams with confident joy. Come, meet the Hero of all history—the last Adam, Abraham's promised son, the Servant of the Lord, the Rock struck to give others life, the anointed warrior-king, the prince of peace, the Lord whose longed-for arrival has brought us salvation. As you discover Christ throughout the Old Testament, you will find his Spirit setting your heart ablaze with love for him who loved and loves you so.

—**Dennis E. Johnson**, Professor of Practical Theology, Westminster Seminary California, Escondido; Author of *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures*; Editor of *Heralds of the King: Christ-Centered Sermons in the Tradition of Edmund P. Clowney*

With so many books on preaching already published and with so many sermons readily available online, why another? Because this book presents some of the finest notes for those who are eager to learn more of Christ-centered, expository preaching and teaching that touches head, heart, and hands. Ed Clowney demonstrates with clarity, cogency, and compassion all that a herald of King Jesus is called to do and be. It is a book to be read

and then reread, not only for professional development in preaching and teaching, but also—and perhaps more importantly—for spiritual nourishment as it propels us onward and upward to the risen and exalted Christ, the glorious “unfolding mystery” of all the Scriptures.

—**Julius J. Kim**, Dean of Students, Associate Professor of Practical Theology, Westminster Seminary California, Escondido

Dr. Clowney magnifies the wonder of the Bible’s holy refrain: behold the Christ, the ultimate prophet, priest, and king! One’s faith grows in direct proportion to one’s grasp of the person and work of Christ. I cannot remember another book, outside the Bible itself, that has so enhanced my mental clarity and enflamed my heart’s delight in my Savior.

In this second edition two covenant heirs—grandfather Ed Clowney and granddaughter Eowyn Stoddard—combine their efforts to both embody and express covenant blessing in this glorious work that magnifies the Covenant Maker himself. This is a treasure to be savored slowly and prayerfully. To read this quickly is to rob oneself of some of the sweetest tastes of biblical grace and truth that God’s Word discloses about our beloved King and Savior. Oh, come, taste, and see that the Lord is indeed good!

—**Joe Novenson**, Senior Teaching Pastor, Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee

In reading the Old Testament, many Christians see loosely connected narratives that are understood as happy and sad stories telling us how to, and how not to, live. But we miss the overarching grand narrative—the account of how mankind possessed everything, lost everything, and how God raised up one nation to reposess what was lost. Edmund Clowney in

The Unfolding Mystery shows us how Israel's stumbling and bumbling leads to the one man, Jesus Christ, in whom all the narratives of the Old Testament come together into the greatest story, that of repossessing everything that God intends for his people. Ed enables us to see the Old Testament as a single thrilling narrative that brings us to Jesus, the restorer of all that was lost who leads his people to something more than they can dare to imagine.

—**Joseph (Skip) Ryan**, Chancellor and Professor of Practical Theology, Redeemer Seminary, Dallas, Austin, Houston

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SECOND EDITION

WITH STUDY AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS

EDMUND P. CLOWNEY

P U B L I S H I N G

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A B O U T T H E A U T H O R

EDMUND P. CLOWNEY (July 30, 1917–March 20, 2005) was a pastor, professor, and theologian. After pastoring churches in Connecticut, Illinois, and New Jersey, he taught practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary and became the seminary’s first president (1966–1982). He served as theologian-in-residence at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, and at Christ the King Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas, and adjunct professor of practical theology at Westminster Seminary California. Throughout his years of ministry, Clowney spoke at conferences and preached at churches, pointing people’s hearts and minds toward the Holy Spirit’s witness to the Son in every text of the Bible through every era of redemptive history.

Dr. Clowney received a B.A. from Wheaton College, a Th.B. from Westminster Theological Seminary, an S.T.M. from Yale Divinity School, and a D.D. from Wheaton College. His books and sermons are available on the Westminster Theological Seminary website.

Dr. Clowney was married to Jean Granger Wright (February 17, 1920–June 7, 2008) for sixty-three years. They had five children, twenty-one grandchildren, and fifteen great grandchildren.

Dr. Clowney asked his granddaughter, Mrs. Eowyn Jones Stoddard, to write questions for *The Unfolding Mystery*. The study and application questions are included at the end of each chapter.

FOR EWORD

THE BIBLE IS A UNITY. That is, perhaps, the most amazing of all the amazing things that are true of it. It consists of sixty-six separate units, written over more than a thousand years against a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, by people who for the most part worked independently of each other and show no awareness that their books would become canonical Scripture. The books themselves are of all kinds: prose jostling poetry, hymns rubbing shoulders with history, sermons with statistics, letters with liturgies, lurid visions with a love song.

Why do we bind up this collection between the same two covers, call it *The Holy Bible*, and treat it as one book? One justification for doing this—one of many—is that the collection as a whole, once we start to explore it, proves to have an organic coherence that is simply stunning. Books written centuries apart seem to have been designed for the express purpose of supplementing and illuminating each other. There is throughout one leading character (God the Creator), one historical perspective (world redemption), one focal figure (Jesus of Nazareth, who is both Son of God and Savior), and one solid body of harmonious teaching about God and godliness. Truly the inner unity of the Bible is miraculous: a sign and a wonder, challenging the unbelief of our skeptical age.

Biblical theology is the umbrella-name for those disciplines that explore the unity of the Bible, delving into the contents of the books, showing the links between them, and pointing up the ongoing flow of the revelatory and redemptive process that reached its climax in Jesus Christ. Historical exegesis, which

explores what the text meant and implied for its original readership, is one of these disciplines. Typology, which looks into Old Testament patterns of divine action, agency, and instruction that found final fulfillment in Christ, is another.

In both these arts, Edmund Clowney is a veteran and a master, combining in himself the sobriety of a wise and learned head with the exuberance of a warm and worshiping heart. *The Unfolding Mystery*, a study of the Old Testament frame for understanding Jesus, is vintage Clowney.

The importance of this theme—the Old Testament pointing to Christ—is great, although for half a century Bible teachers, possibly embarrassed by the memory of too-fanciful ventures into typology in the past, have not made much of it. (Its abiding importance, we might say, is commensurate with its current neglect!) For this reason, Dr. Clowney’s admirable treatment of it should be greatly valued; it fills a gap, and supplies a felt need.

Expect your heart to be stirred, as well as your head cleared, as you read.

DR. J. I. PACKER

INTRODUCTION

“THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD”—this title has been used for the Bible, and with good reason. The Bible is the greatest storybook, not just because it is full of wonderful stories but because it tells one *great* story, the story of Jesus. That story is still being told to thousands who hear it for the first time—perhaps in a Hong Kong apartment, or in an American university dormitory.

But where in the Bible does the old, old story begin? Not in the manger of a Bethlehem stable, but earlier. How much earlier? Luke’s Gospel begins the story at least a full year before the birth of Jesus.

An old priest, Zechariah, was standing by the altar of incense in the Temple at Jerusalem. Suddenly he was not alone in the sanctuary. An angel stood there beside him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard” (Luke 1:13). The angel then announced to Zechariah that he would have a son, John. The marvel was not simply that an elderly childless couple would have a son, but that their son would be a prophet. Centuries had passed since God last spoke through the prophets. But God would make John like the ancient prophet Elijah. John would be the forerunner of the coming Lord.

Clearly the announcement of the angel to Zechariah was not the beginning for Luke, even though he took up the story there. The birth of John fulfilled an old prophecy: “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes” (Mal. 4:5). That prophecy is found on the last page of the Old Testament. But that was not the beginning either.

To discover the start of the story, we must go back to read about Elijah and find out how he prepared for the coming of the Lord. How far back must we go in order to begin at the very beginning? Luke gives us a dramatic answer when he provides the legal genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23–37). The royal line goes back through Zerubbabel, Nathan, David, to the tribe of Judah, then to Abraham, then to Shem, Noah, and Seth, “the son of Adam, the son of God.”

Luke would have us understand that the story of Jesus begins with the story of mankind. Jesus was the Son of Adam, the Son of God. To follow the story of Jesus we must begin with the first page of the Bible. Indeed, John, in the introduction to his Gospel, takes us back even further: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1). John testifies that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Creator and the Goal of all history (Rev. 22:13, 16). John came to this astonishing conclusion about Jesus not simply from the words and deeds that he witnessed, but because he came to recognize Jesus as the Lord of the promise, the Savior of Israel.

John starts his Gospel with “In the beginning . . .” to point us back to the real start of the story. He writes so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31). To understand what John means, we need to examine something that he knew well: the story of the Old Testament.

Anyone who has had Bible stories read to him as a child knows that there are great stories in the Bible. But it is possible to know Bible stories, yet miss *the* Bible story. The Bible is much more than William How stated: “a golden casket where gems of truth are stored.” It is more than a bewildering collection of oracles, proverbs, poems, architectural directions, annals, and prophecies. The Bible has a story line. It traces an unfolding drama. The story follows the history of Israel, but it does not begin there, nor does it contain what you would expect in a national history.

The narrative does not pay tribute to Israel. Rather, it regularly condemns Israel and justifies God's severest judgments.

The story is God's story. It describes His work to rescue rebels from their folly, guilt, and ruin. And in His rescue operation, God always takes the initiative. When the apostle Paul reflects on the drama of God's saving work, he says in awe, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen" (Rom. 11:36).

Only God's revelation could maintain a drama that stretches over thousands of years as though they were days or hours. Only God's revelation can build a story where the end is anticipated from the beginning, and where the guiding principle is not chance or fate, but promise. Human authors may build fiction around a plot they have devised, but only God can shape history to a real and ultimate purpose. The purpose of God from the beginning centers on His Son: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. . . . All things were created by him and for him" (Col. 1:15–16).

God's creation is *by* His Son and *for* His Son; in the same way His plan of salvation begins and ends in Christ. Even before Adam and Eve were sent out of Eden, God announced His purpose. He would send His Son into the world to bring salvation (Gen. 3:15).

God did not accomplish His purpose all at once. He did not send Christ to be born of Eve by the gates of Eden, nor did He inscribe the whole Bible on the tablets of stone given to Moses at Sinai. Rather, God showed Himself to be the Lord of times and seasons (Acts 1:7). The story of God's saving work is framed in epochs, in periods of history that God determines by His word of promise. God created by His word of power. He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light (Gen. 1:3). In the same way God spoke His word of promise. That word has no less power because it is

spoken in the future tense. God's promises are sure; they will be fulfilled at the appointed time (Gen. 21:2).

Yet while the story is God's story, and salvation is His work, men and women are not just spectators. To be sure, there are times when God's people are told to stand still and see the deliverance of the Lord (Ex. 14:13–14). But they are also commanded by God to leave their homes and become pilgrims, to march through waterless wastes, and to fight hostile nations. The grace of God in delivering and leading them calls them to faith in Him, to the commitment of whole-hearted trust. Because God promises what He will do, His people may joyfully confess that "salvation comes from the LORD" (Jonah 2:9). But since God does not do all that He has promised at once, the faith of His people is tried and tested. Their longing becomes intense. At times the promise seems not only distant but illusory. They fall victim to unbelief and cry, "Is the LORD among us or not?" (Ex. 17:7).

The writers of the New Testament remind us of the reality and intensity of the faith of the Old Testament saints. The author of Hebrews surveys their tortures and triumphs, and concludes, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them" (Heb. 11:13, KJV).

To encourage and strengthen His suffering saints, the Lord often repeated His promises. Through the prophets, God spoke to Israel, denouncing the sin of those who rebelled, but painting ever more marvelous pictures of the blessing to come. The apostle Peter reflected on the ministry of those Old Testament prophets:

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and the circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. (1 Peter 1:10–11)

Not only the prophets, Peter tells us, but even the angels of heaven longed to peer into the mysteries of God's great plan.

God's drama is not a fiction in its slow unfolding, or in its staggering realization. The story of the Bible is real history, wrought in the lives of hundreds and thousands of human beings. In a world where death reigned, they endured, trusting the faithfulness of God's promise. If we forget the story line of the Old Testament, we will also miss the witness of their faith. That omission cuts the heart out of the Bible. Sunday school stories are then told as tamer versions of the Sunday comics, where Samson substitutes for Superman. David's meeting with Goliath then dissolves into an ancient Hebrew version of Jack the Giant Killer.

No, David is not a brave little boy who isn't afraid of the big bad giant. He is the Lord's anointed, chosen of God to be the king and deliverer of Israel. God chose David as a king after His own heart in order to prepare the way for David's great Son, our Deliverer and Champion. David's reply to the taunts of Goliath shows us that David was a warrior of faith: "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (1 Sam. 17:45).

Because David fought in the name of the Lord, his ordeal and victory had meaning beyond the immediate battle. He was confident of victory because he knew that God had called Israel to be His people. He was the God of the hosts of heaven, but also the God of the armies of Israel.

David had been anointed by Samuel the prophet. He knew that the Lord had called him from following his father's sheep to become the shepherd of Israel. David filled a role. God granted deliverance through him, not because he was brave or a dead shot with the sling, but because he was chosen, and filled with God's Spirit. When God later promised to give a

Son of David everlasting rule, He made it clear that David's kingship was not an end in itself, but served to prepare for the great King to come.

In this way the Old Testament gives us types that foreshadow the New Testament fulfillment. A type is a form of analogy that is distinctive to the Bible. Like all analogies, a type combines identity and difference. David and Christ were both given kingly power and rule. In spite of the vast differences between David's royalty and Christ's, there are points of formal identity that make the comparison meaningful.

Yet it is just this degree of difference that makes biblical types distinctive. The promises of God in the Bible do not offer a return to a golden age of the past. David's Son to come is not simply another David. Rather, He is so much greater than David can speak of Him as Lord (Ps. 110:1). The scriptural scholars of Jesus' day did not understand this. They could not answer the question of Jesus: "If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" (Matt. 22:45). Both Jesus and His adversaries knew that the promised Messiah was to be the Son of David. But only Jesus understood why David in the Spirit had called Him "Lord."

The story of Jesus, then, does not begin with the fulfillment of the promise, but with the promise itself, and with the acts of God that accompanied His word. As we go back to the beginning of the story, we find much that the New Testament does not tell us, because we have already been told. As we see the judges that God raised up to deliver Israel from their oppressors, we understand better what God meant when He said He would put on righteousness for a breastplate, and salvation for a helmet, and would Himself be the Judge and Savior of His people (Isa. 59:16–17). When God reduced Gideon's army to a mere three hundred men, we recognize that it was God who delivered, not the strength of arms. When God reduced the force of Israel still

further to one man, Samson, we see that God could deliver by one champion whose victories in life were crowned by his conquest in death.

At the same time, when we move back toward the beginning of the story, we find that the differences are overwhelming: not only for us, but for those who in faith received the promises. Samson's role as a judge pointed forward to God's promised deliverance of Israel from all their enemies, but Samson's performance fell far short of his calling. Indeed, Samson was made a judge almost in spite of himself. His deliverances sometimes came from plights of his own making as he pursued Philistine women more than Philistine armies.

Yet, blinded and mocked in the temple of Dagon, Samson nevertheless died as a judge, endued by the Lord. He stood with his hands thrust against the pillars of the temple, pillars that rested in stone sockets. Then he prayed with bitter irony for revenge against the Philistines, even though his last word was "Let me die with the Philistines!" (Judg. 16:30). In his death, the sacred writer tells us, he destroyed more than in his life. Here Scripture shows us that God can work His deliverance even through the death of His mighty judge.

The failures and sins of Samson, no less than his victories, are part of the story, for they show that one greater than Samson had to come if God's promises were to be realized. Samson kept only the outward purity of the Nazirite vow (and broke even that at last); true and inward purity would appear in the final Judge of Israel.

The purpose of this book is not to tell the whole story from the beginning. There is a Book that does that! Rather, its aim is to follow the line of the plot, to touch on key episodes, and to offer a guide to the underlying story of all the stories, so that we may see the Lord of the Word in the Word of the Lord.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who was the last prophet to announce the coming of Jesus?
2. Where in the Bible was the birth of John the Baptist foretold?
3. With whom does Luke's genealogy of Jesus begin? So where does the story really start? Why?
4. What is special about God's revelation compared to any other human story?
5. What role do God's people play in the drama of redemption? Why?
6. Define a type. What makes biblical types distinctive?
7. Take Samson as an example and explain how he is a type of Jesus. How is he similar to Christ, and how is he different?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. "The greatest story ever told" is a title that has been used for the Bible. Do you agree? How else might you describe the Bible?
2. How does the introduction to *The Unfolding Mystery* make you desire to read the rest of the book?
3. Have you ever felt as though reading the Old Testament is comparable to watching a foreign film without subtitles? If so, how does the introduction change your perspective on the Old Testament? Does it give you a desire to read the Bible starting at the beginning?
4. In your own words, summarize the thesis Clowney lays out for his book.
5. Read 2 Corinthians 12:5, 9–11 and relate these verses to study question 5.

T H E N E W M A N



THE VERY FIRST written Scripture came from the hand of God Himself: God inscribed His law on two tablets of stone (Ex. 31:18). That inscription begins: “I am the LORD your God” (Ex. 20:2).

God identified Himself there on Mount Sinai as the God of Israel. Israel’s God was not a tribal deity, however. He was also the King of the nations and the God of creation. Included in God’s revelation to Israel was not only the law by which their life and worship was to be regulated, but much more. To know the Lord their God, Israel had to know Him as the Creator. To know their calling, the people needed to know the story of their father Abraham, and his calling. It was also essential for them to know God’s rule over the nations: the nations that were to be blessed through the new nation begun from the son of Abraham.

The first book of Moses begins at the beginning to tell the story that leads to the calling of Israel and their exodus from Egypt. It is the book of “generations,” tracing not only the stories of the fathers of Israel, but putting their calling in the context of God’s dealings with the whole human race from the time of creation. Although *all* the earth was His, Israel was God’s chosen people, His precious possession. Yet Israel’s calling was not for their sake alone. They were chosen from the nations, that they

might bear witness to the nations. To do that, Israel needed to confess the God who called Abraham, spared Noah, and put Adam in the garden.

MADE AS THE IMAGE OF GOD

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27). In a beautifully crafted literary form, the first chapter of Genesis leads up to the climax of creation: God made man and woman in His image. All the mythology of the nations is swept aside. Mankind does not originate in a process of divine copulation or from the blood of a slaughtered god. A man is not a piece of a god, nor a piecing together of god and beast. Rather, Adam and Eve are God’s creatures, but creatures who bear His likeness. That they are God’s creatures is perfectly clear. Their creation is not assigned to a separate day in the divine work: animals and men are alike made on the sixth day of creation.

If the first pair are blessed and told to be fruitful and multiply, so are the fish of the sea (Gen. 1:22, 28). Both are multiplying creatures. Human creatureliness is further stressed when the second chapter goes on to describe the “generations” of the heavens and of the earth: that is, what God’s hand brings forth from His created world. The earth brings forth living creatures at God’s command, but man, too, comes from the earth. God forms Adam from the dust of the ground, and Eve is formed from the body of Adam.

On the other hand, both chapters emphasize the distinctiveness of this human creature. In chapter one, the creation of man follows a divine determination: “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). The mention of the Spirit of God at the beginning of the chapter suggests that here God takes counsel with Himself, not merely as a man might address his own soul, but in the mysterious richness of the divine being. In the

second chapter, the remarkable distinctiveness of the creation of man is shown first in the special care God uses to form man from the dust. Beyond the touch of God's hands is the breath of His lips. In a picture of intimate fellowship, God breathes into man's nostrils the breath of life.

Man is a creature, because he is made by God. But he is a unique creature, because he is made like God. The term "image" is used later in the Old Testament to describe idols. God forbids men to make images for worship, even images of men made in God's image. Man is made, not simply in the image of God, as though the divine image were reproduced in man, but rather, man is made *as* the image of God. He is like God.

Again the Genesis account is set against the convictions of the nations. Racial mythologies separate one tribe or people as descended from the gods. Royal myths teach that the king alone is made in the image of the god. A cuneiform text declares, "The father of the king, my lord, was the image of Bel, and the king, my lord, is the image of Bel."¹ In Genesis, however, *mankind* is created in the image of God, "in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27).

Made in God's image, man's nature and role are unique in creation. The fact that man shares organic, bodily life with all the animate creation qualifies him to represent that creation before God. Through man the praises of the physical creation can be addressed to God. Humanity, the climax of creation, has a role to fulfill. Man mediates between the Creator and the created world of which he is part. In man God may deal with His creation personally. God speaks to man, and with human lips man replies for the creation of which he is head.

Because man represents the very glory of God in created form, he also rules over creation. Man's image bearing is joined to his dominion over creation (Gen. 1:26–27). The charming story of Adam's naming of the animals is not given just for the delight of

children. It indicates Adam's calling by God to understand the forms of creation and to order them. It therefore also dramatically shows that no animal, however loyal in his service of man, can be his partner and equal.

We all know a relationship in which one differs from another, yet shows a remarkable likeness. We often say that a little boy is the very image of his father. Scripture states that when Seth was born to Adam and Eve, Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image" (Gen. 5:3, kJV). Since this is recorded after the fall into sin, and since the chapter reaffirms Adam's creation in the image of God, some have concluded that the image was lost in the Fall, and that what remains is no longer the image of God but only the weak reflection of that image in Adam. In the same book of Genesis, however, the value of human life is established by appeal to the creation of man in the image of God (Gen. 9:6; cf. James 3:9).

Since the image of God in some sense continues to distinguish man from the animals, we may assume that Seth in Adam's image is also in God's image. For this reason Luke traces the genealogy of Christ to Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. The emphasis in Genesis is on the continuity of the image, in spite of the Fall. Seth, the son, is in the image of his father, and Adam is in the image of God. The implication that Luke draws attention to is clear: Adam, as the image-bearer in the likeness of God, may be called the son of God. At the same time, in Genesis it is Seth, not Cain, who is said to bear the image of his father, Adam. It is to the line of Seth, not of Cain, that God's promise is given; in that line true Sonship will be realized.

What a splendid figure is Adam in the Genesis account! Formed by God and made like God, he is placed in the garden that God planted, teeming with the richness of created life: scurrying animals, trees burdened with fruit, skies bright with sunshine or heavy with mist. This first man is the lord of all; through him

creation lifts its eyes to the Creator and speaks God's praise. Adam is the cultivator of the garden, free to explore its riches and develop the world beyond. There is gold in Havilah. Great rivers water the garden and flow forth beyond it.

Adam's freedom would seem to have only one restraint. God pointed out to him one tree in the garden of which he must not eat. A smaller limitation would be hard to imagine. All the fruits of Eden were his to enjoy. All the trees were his to cultivate, all the animals his to call and command. Yet Adam, the son of God, was being tested in his obedience to his Father and Creator. He, the first man, held the destiny of all his descendants, for his was the pivotal role. He was the father of those to be born in his image; he represented the race of those who would come from him. By obedience under testing, his righteousness would pass beyond its original innocence. He would know the difference between good and evil by choosing the good. He would be confirmed as the righteous son of God, free to eat of the tree of life forever.

But Adam was alone in paradise. God formed from his very side a woman to be with him, his companion and helper. To Adam's role as head of creation was added a new role of headship in relation to the woman who was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:23). Together they could be fruitful and fill the earth that was theirs to possess.

Even before we are told the story of the Fall, the Genesis account prepares us for the role Jesus Christ would play in God's plan of salvation. The figure of Adam at the dawn of human history reminds us that God deals with mankind personally. Adam served as the representative man. Christ came as the second Adam (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22)—not as a divine afterthought, but as the One chosen from the foundation of the world to manifest all that the divine image in man may mean.

Before the story of redemption begins, the sole figure of Adam, God's image-bearer, stands before us. He receives God's command

and promise even before Eve has been given to him. All this has meaning, not only for the beginning of human history, but for its culmination. Adam, the representative man, prepares us for Christ. Christ is more than a substitute for Adam, a stand-in, as it were, to succeed where Adam failed. Christ, who is the Omega, the goal of human history and of created humanity, is also the Alpha, the true Adam, Head of the new and true humanity. He is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation” (Col. 1:15), for He is not only the Prince of creation; He is also the Creator. His image bearing infinitely exceeds that of Adam, for as the eternal Son, He is one with the Father. At the last, Adam’s created sonship can only reflect the greater Sonship of the divine model. The apostle Paul rejoices that the sonship we gain in Christ far exceeds what we lost in Adam (Rom. 8:14–17).

For that reason, too, God forbade the people of Israel to make images of God to focus their worship (Deut. 4:15–24). They were warned not only against the worship of idols representing other gods. They were also reminded that they saw no form when God spoke from Sinai, and that they were not to attempt to make a representation of the true God.

This does not mean that there can be no representation of God; after all, God made man in His image. But it means that man is not free to invent an image for worship, not even a replica of the image God made: man himself. In the plan of the tabernacle given to Israel in the wilderness, the ark of the covenant represented the very throne of God. The golden lid of this ark was the mercy seat, the place where God was enthroned in the midst of Israel. Representations of the cherubim with outstretched wings attended the throne. But on the throne there was no image. Only the light of the *shekinah* glory represented the presence of God for Israel.

Does this seem strange? God makes man in His image, but man may not replicate that image as the center of his worship. Of

course, Israel had to be taught that God is an invisible Spirit, not a material being. But there was a further reason. God claimed a monopoly on His own self-revelation. He would appear to men as He chose, not as they might imagine. The empty seat above the ark was reserved for the One who was to come.

When Philip said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us,” Jesus replied, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?” (John 14:8–10).

Jesus did not refuse the worship of Mary as she anointed Him before His death (John 12:1–8). It is not idolatry to call Jesus “Lord.” Indeed, Christians are those who call upon the name of Jesus the Lord in their worship (1 Cor. 1:2). They recognize that there is One who bears God’s image in human flesh and at whose feet we may fall down to worship (Col. 2:9; Rev. 1:17). Whoever honors the Son, honors the Father. John writes of Jesus Christ, “He is the true God and eternal life. Dear children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:20–21).

Adam stands as a figure pointing us to Jesus Christ. The New Testament also perceives figurative meaning in the story of the forming of Eve. The apostle Paul goes back to the creation account to teach the right relationship of husbands and wives. Since Eve was taken from the body of Adam, he was to care for her as for his own flesh. The beautiful creation story teaches not only that marriage is a union of two who become one, but that the two were *made* of one. They belong together. But when Paul writes about this in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he does not simply talk about Adam and Eve. He passes at once to talk about Christ and the church:

He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. “For this

reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:28–33)

Paul cites the command from Genesis, but he applies it to husbands and wives precisely because it deals with Christ and the church. Is Paul simply creating an allegory, an imaginative but artificial analogy, or is there a deeper connection? Can the foundation of marriage in the creation account be a type of the relation of Christ and the church? Yes, because the principle respecting marriage enunciated in Genesis 2:20–25 is fulfilled in Christ. The bond of intimate union created in marriage is to take precedence over the bonds that join us to others. A man is to leave his father and mother to be united to his wife.

In Genesis the command follows the statement of Adam (“bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” [2:23]). God’s command is grounded in His act of creation. The relation of man and wife is exclusive. The love that joins them is necessarily a jealous love; that is, it is a focused love that would be broken by adultery. This principle is again stated in the Ten Commandments, when God gives His covenant law to His redeemed people. That commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14), is not given simply to provide a stable home life for Israelite society. It is given to define a special and intensive love that goes beyond the command to love one’s neighbor.

This is the principle that God Himself invokes as He reveals Himself to Israel. God is a jealous God; His name is “Jealous” (Ex. 34:14). He demands of Israel exclusive devotion, the jealous love for which marriage is a type and symbol. His people are to love Him with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind.

Throughout the history of Israel, the people were guilty of spiritual adultery. Consider Solomon, the magnificent king at the peak of Israel’s power and blessing. He built the Temple of

stone and cedar and overlaid it with gold. He dedicated this Temple to the service of the Lord, praying that through all the earth people might turn to the Temple to pray, and that God would hear them.

But now we see Solomon ascending the Mount of Olives, immediately to the east of the Temple mount. He is choosing a site for a shrine to be built on the top of the mountain. There Solomon stands: he can see the glittering gold of the Temple of the Lord in the sunshine, but he is now preparing for the dedication of a shrine to Chemosh, the god of the Moabites. Solomon has come to this place by a policy of statesmanship that is full of worldly wisdom, but empty of faith. He has bought security for Israel by making treaties with the surrounding nations and sealing them in marital alliances. He builds the shrine of Chemosh, not for himself, but for one of his Moabite wives. Yet how directly and brazenly does he defy the law of God and the jealous God of Israel, who had warned His people to destroy all the altars of Canaan, "For thou shalt worship no other god: for [Yahweh], whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. 34:14, KJV).

But God withholds His judgment and calls Israel to repentance. Through the prophet Hosea He shows the wonder of divine love toward the adulterous wife. Nevertheless, eventually the judgment of the Lord must fall upon impenitent Israel.

When Jesus came to gather to Himself the people of God, He revealed Himself as the Bridegroom, come to claim His church as His bride. The figure is not accidental. It is not that God looks down from heaven to discern some human relationship that might prove to be a fitting symbol of His love. The reality is the other way around. When God formed Eve from the body of Adam, He was providing the means by which we might be prepared to understand the joy of an exclusive love. Only in that way could we be prepared to grasp something of the burning intensity of the divine love: love that can bear

no rival, because God is a personal God, and His love for His people is personal.

Most of the religions of the world could build a shrine to Chemosh with little difficulty. Polytheistic religion can always add one more god. In pantheism, god is everything, so Chemosh is just another name for the infinite spirit. In Hinduism, Brahma is the impersonal absolute, and Chemosh could be added as just another part of a polytheistic phase that eases the path for those who are not yet prepared to take the mountain straight. Even deism, with its conception of a remote creator, may reason that he can be approached in many forms. Certainly that distant deity would not be troubled with jealousy if we called him Chemosh, or worshiped Chemosh in his absence.

The exclusive bond between God and His people is a major theme of the Old Testament, but it comes to full expression in the New. “There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “Jealousy” and “zeal” are two translations of a single word in both Hebrew and Greek. The holy zeal of God burns within the mystery of the Trinity. The zeal of the Son for His Father is matched by the zeal of the Father for His Son.

When Jesus cleansed the Temple of the hucksters who had turned it into a market, He displayed His zeal for the holiness of God’s house, but also for the blessedness of God’s house as the house of prayer for all nations. Jesus was zealous for the redeeming grace of God symbolized by the Temple. That zeal caused Him not only to lift the scourge, but to bare His back to the scourge. Only by the zeal of His love could the jealous love of the Father for His people be satisfied. His zeal for God’s house consumed Him, even on the cross. “Destroy this temple,” He said, speaking of His body, “and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:17, 19, kjv). It is the zeal of God’s love in Christ that claims the church as the bride of the Lord.

PROVEN AS THE SON OF GOD

When the Bible sets Adam before us at the beginning of the record given to God's redeemed people, we are already pointed to the second Adam who is to come. In the forming of Eve, and in the love of Adam for Eve as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:23), Christ is also revealed in His jealous love for the church. The apostle Paul shares that love of Christ: "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him" (2 Cor. 11:2).

Adam's test in the garden points toward the testing of Christ, although Adam's disobedience turns the parallel into contrast. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all speak of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. In the Gospel accounts of the temptation, there is an underlying reference to Adam's testing in the garden.

Christ's testing came at the very outset of His ministry. It was the Holy Spirit who drove Christ into the desert: the Spirit of the Father who came upon Him at His baptism—the Spirit, therefore, of His Sonship. "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22, KJV). Adam was tested that he might be confirmed in his sonship. Jesus was tested in sonship, too. He was tested as the Messianic Son who was also the only begotten and beloved Son of the Father: the divine Son in human flesh. His encounter with Satan was a trial by ordeal. Christ invaded the fallen world where Satan was laying claim to the kingdoms of men. There He met the "prince of this world" in combat.

Just as we should see how Genesis points us to the Gospels, so we should appreciate, too, how the Gospels point us to Genesis. Christ's temptation was not endured primarily in order to give us an example of how we should deal with temptation. The temptations Satan used to assault Jesus were surely not the temptations he would use for already fallen sinners.

Certainly Satan does not find it necessary to offer all the kingdoms of the world to the average sinner. He can buy most

sinners for small change. Nor does Satan tempt us to test our powers to work miracles. No, Satan's temptations of Jesus were directed at His consciousness that He was the divine Son, and that He had come to do His Father's will. Satan aimed to cause Jesus to doubt the goodness of God. With that same aim he tempted Eve: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" (Gen. 3:1). He grotesquely exaggerated the divine prohibition in Eden to insinuate that God was incredibly uncaring about human needs, and hostile to human progress.

In the wilderness, it might seem that Satan would have a much easier task. Eve and Adam lacked nothing; Jesus was in the last stages of starvation. God had put Adam and Eve in the garden; He drove Jesus into the wilderness. Yet Satan did not approach Christ nearly so directly. He did not say, "Did God really drive You out into this barren wasteland to let You die here?"

Rather, he only suggested that Christ provide for Himself, since it would seem that His Father was not providing for Him. At the same time, Satan suggested that by providing for Himself, Jesus could clear up any doubts about His own identity. Jesus had heard the voice from heaven declare that He was the Son of God. Satan would have Him question that word. "Hath God said?" echoed in the wilderness from the voice of the serpent in the garden.

Jesus repulsed that temptation by using the Word of God, quoted from Deuteronomy. Jesus not only filled the role of the second Adam, the true Son of God. He was also the true Israel, God's Son. Israel, too, had been tested in sonship after God had said to Pharaoh, "Let my son go, that he may serve me" (Ex. 4:23, kJV). God led the people of Israel in the desert for forty years, to prove them, to see if they would learn that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Deut. 8:2-3). God's words to Israel were given from Sinai in the Ten Commandments; they were also given to guide the

march of Israel, as they struck camp or pitched their tents at the word of the Lord (Ex. 17:1).

What the people of Israel failed to do, Jesus did. In their hunger, they failed to trust the word of God. They not only doubted God's goodness; they defied it, and despised the manna of His provision. But Jesus, in contrast to both Adam and Israel, was obedient as the true Son of God. He lived by the word of God: not only the scriptural precept, but His Father's voice from heaven, and the will of the Father that drove Him into the wilderness.

After his first temptation failed, Satan took Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple and urged Him to cast Himself down. That temptation invited Jesus to exchange faith for sight. It had more force than we might recognize, for Satan quoted a psalm that clearly contained God's promise to His Messiah (Ps. 91:11-12). Jesus shaped His life as the one in whom the Scriptures were fulfilled. Satan was now asking Jesus not to disobey Scripture, but to fulfill it. Actually Satan was proposing presumption in the name of faith, but he was suggesting that Jesus would lack faith if He refused to put God to the test. Surely, if He did *not* jump, it must be because He couldn't believe that the angels would lift Him up before He struck the pavement of the Temple below.

Of course, there is a notable contrast between this temptation and the proposal that Eve eat of the forbidden fruit. In the garden, Satan had directly contradicted the word of God: "You will not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). But in speaking to Jesus, Satan, far from contradicting the word of God, appears to be calling Jesus to believe it and to act on it. But it is not faith to demand that God show, once and for all, whether His promises are true. This is not to receive the testing that God sends; it is rather to put God to the test.

Adam and Eve tempted God by daring Him, as it were, to carry out His threatened punishment for disobedience. Satan wanted Christ to challenge God's faithfulness in a much less

direct way, but he wanted Him to act on doubt of the same kind. There would be no other reason to leap from the Temple roof except to determine, once and for all, whether God would keep His promise. To Eve, Satan essentially said, "Eat, you will not surely die—for God has lied to you." To Christ he said, "Jump, You will not surely die—unless God has lied to You."

Satan had one more temptation, presented as the last in the Gospel of Matthew. He took Jesus to a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in their glory, and promised to make Jesus king over them all—if He would fall down and worship Satan as the one authorized to give them away (Matt. 4:8–9). Again, the parallel with the temptation in the garden is striking. Adam had been given dominion over the world by God: it was his legitimate calling. Yet Satan suggested that a greater dominion was possible, one in which the royalty of Adam and Eve would take on a different character, a glory they could barely imagine. They could become as God: not innocent little creatures put to digging in God's walled-in garden, but mighty rivals to God Himself, having the knowledge that God Himself possesses of good and evil.

As Satan would have it, God was not to be worshiped, but envied; not served, but thwarted. Man could be his own god, build his own dominion, possess the world not as God's steward but as an absolute monarch. The Tempter, of course, would create the assumption that he was the friend and advocate of man; that he intervened to deliver man from exploitation by God and to open for him the destiny he desires.

The implications of the temptation are evident, however. If Adam and Eve had not first been blinded by their own desires, they would have questioned the authority of the serpent. Who was this creature who called God a liar? What new relation would be the outcome of heeding the serpent rather than the Creator? If the serpent offered to make them rivals of God, what were his own desires? It is evident enough that Adam and Eve could not

reject the word of the Lord without becoming captive to the word of the Devil. Satan did not openly ask for the homage of Adam, but that was plainly the outcome of his success. By obeying the serpent, Adam and Eve made themselves the friends of Satan and the enemies of God.

In tempting Jesus, Satan followed the same strategy, but again the issue was enlarged by the nature and calling of Jesus as the true Son of God. He was the heir of all the kingdoms of the world, and the Lord of the principalities and powers by which Satan would keep the nations in bondage to his will. To receive His proper dominion at once would obviously mean avoiding the suffering and death He knew to be the Father's calling to Him. Satan pretended that Jesus could gain His inheritance intact at the price of a brief acknowledgment of him as the Donor.

Malcolm Muggeridge suggested that if the temptation were to be enacted in the contemporary world, Satan would approach Jesus through the media, offering Him prime-time television to proclaim His message to the whole world, with one small acknowledgment. At the beginning and end of the program there would be the customary credit line: "This program has been brought to you through the courtesy of Lucifer Enterprises, Inc."

Jesus refused Satan's offer, and proceeded to demonstrate an authority that Satan had not offered: the authority to command Satan to depart. The analogy to the sin of Adam is present by total contrast. Adam desired a greater authority than God had given, and inherited shame and doom. He would be God's rival and thereby set himself against God, siding with the Enemy. Jesus desired to serve His Father, and inherited a dominion beyond the dreams of Adam or of Satan: a dominion that does not rival God's Kingdom, but that is one with His Kingdom.

At the right hand of the Father, Jesus Christ, the God-man, exercises total judgment and rule over all creation. Even before His exaltation to the Father's right hand, Jesus on earth displayed

divine authority. Not only could He speak with divine power, but He could heal with divine ease. He commanded demons to depart, for He had bound the strong man, Satan, in single combat, and prevailed over him (Matt. 12:24–30).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who wrote the first Scriptures?
2. Read Genesis 1:27. What is unique about this creation account?
3. What is the difference between these two statements: “Man is made in the image of God” and “Man is made as the image of God”?
4. Explain the following phrase: “Humanity, the climax of creation, has a role to fulfill.”
5. What was the purpose of Adam’s testing in the garden?
6. Read Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:22. Compare Adam and Christ. In what ways are they similar or different?
7. Adam and Eve’s relationship points forward to the relationship of Christ and the church. Read Ephesians 5:28–33 and explain how Paul establishes the comparison.
8. Explain the following statement: “The exclusive bond between God and His people is a major theme of the Old Testament, but it comes to full expression in the New.”
9. Compare Adam’s testing in the garden to Jesus’ testing in the desert. What did Satan want both Adam and Jesus to doubt?
10. Compare and contrast Jesus and Adam’s *reactions* to temptation.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. You are made in the image of God. How should this change
 - a. how you view yourself?

- b. how you view other Christians?
- c. how you view unbelievers?
- 2. If you are married, how does your relationship with your spouse reflect Jesus' relationship to His bride, the church?
- 3. If you are single, how can you prepare yourself for, or help others have, a God-honoring marriage relationship?
- 4. Read Zephaniah 3:17 and think about God's love for His people. Are you in love with your Creator? What are some barriers that hinder you from having a deep, loving relationship with God?
- 5. How do you respond to temptation? What can you learn from the way Jesus responded to Satan?

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