

# All Things New

## *Creation, Fall, and New Creation in the Passion of Christ*

The story of Easter is not merely about three dramatic days in Jerusalem; it's the hinge of redemptive history, the turning point of Scripture itself. The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ are not detached events at the end of the Gospels; they are the now-but-not-yet resolution of what began in Genesis. To grasp the depth of what occurred on those days so many years ago, we must view these events in light of the greater story God has been writing since the very beginning: creation, fall, redemption, and new creation.

The Bible opens in a garden; it closes in “a better country, that is, a heavenly one” (Hebrews 11:16). Between those two scenes stands the incarnation, a cross, and an empty tomb. If we are to understand Easter as we ought, we must grasp what was first given, what was then lost, and what Christ came to restore.

### **1. Creation: Humanity Under God's Rule**

Genesis 1-2 presents humanity not as accidental life in a neutral world, but human beings created under God's authority and placed in covenant relationship with him. God makes man and woman in his image (Genesis 1:26-27), with the implication that we are created to reflect God, to exercise dominion under his rule, and to live in fellowship with him. Adam is placed in the garden and given both a privilege and a command:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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.” (Genesis 2:15-17)

The garden is not just scenery; it is sanctuary. Not just a setting, but sacred space. Adam's role is royal, prophetic, and priestly, ruling God's creation, embodying his Word, and stewarding what has been entrusted to him. The command to refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil establishes order. Life is to be tied to obedience to that command, with death as the consequence of rebelling against it. This is not arbitrary. It reveals something fundamental about creaturehood: we live by trusting God's Word, not by redefining morality for ourselves.

From the beginning, humanity has been placed under a structure of authority where one individual serves as a representative of others. Adam does not act only for himself; he stands for humanity. This is what theologians call “federal headship.” In life, we are often represented by others. A leader's decision stands for a nation; a parent's decision for a family. Similarly, Adam stands as the representative of humanity. We are created under a head. Thus, what happens next is not isolated to Adam, but is catastrophic for humanity as a whole.

Creation is covenantal. Life with God is personal, face-to-face, and genuine. It is ordered, whole, and good. This makes the entrance of sin into the world more than just a mistake; it is a decisive moment that alters the story of what it means to be human.

## **2. The Fall: Ruin Through Representation**

Genesis 3 records the tragic moment when the covenant is broken and trust between God and man collapses. Adam and Eve do more than just break a command; they reject God's authority while attempting to grasp autonomy for themselves, to be like God, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:5). By rejecting God's Word, they define wisdom and good on their own terms. The consequences are immediate:

- They feel shame before the Lord because of their actions.
- They rupture their perfect relationship with God.
- They face judgment as he confronts their sin.
- They are exiled by God from the garden.
- They condemn all humanity to the curse of death.

Sin is not just a moral flaw; it is willful rebellion with legal consequences. Paul interprets this moment in Romans 5, where he writes:

Therefore just as 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 reigns because humanity stands in Adam. Augustine put it simply and directly: "For as all men were in that one man when he fell into sin...so also all who are born of him derive from him that guilt...and therefore are subject to death. For this reason, the apostle says, 'In Adam all die.'" (The *Enchiridion*, 46). We do not simply imitate Adam; we inherit his condition and his guilt. It is imputed to us at birth and is a condition that all human beings inherit (Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23).

The fall is not simply the beginning of bad behaviour or the corruption of mankind; it introduces condemnation. We are not born innocent, growing into bad behaviour because of personal choice. Humanity is inherently alienated from God, enslaved to sin, and liable to judgment. We had communion with God and lost it. We were without sin and incurred guilt. We could eat of the Tree of Life and we forfeited it all for death.

If redemption is to be real and complete, it must address each of these things. It must restore communion, satisfy God's justice, and overcome sin and death. That requires a new representative. And so, thankfully, the story continues.

## **3. Palm Sunday: The Representative Who Comes to Reclaim**

Jesus enters the scene. God the Son comes to earth, taking on human flesh. Born of the virgin Mary, he "increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." (Luke

2:52). His short but impactful ministry is, as he says, “that I may preach...for that is why I came out” (Mark 1:38). When he enters Jerusalem in Matthew 21, he does so deliberately, fulfilling the prophetic expectation of Zechariah 9:9, accepting public recognition as the King of Israel, the long-awaited Messiah. This is not an accident or spontaneous enthusiasm, but intentional confrontation.

The cry in Zechariah is to the “daughter of Jerusalem,” which represents not just a city, but the centre of Israel’s worship and her great failure. It is the Temple, the sacrifices, and the promises of God to his people. It’s the place of hardened hearts, failed leaders, and rejected prophets. The King rides in not merely to inspire, but to claim. He comes as the true man, the second Adam, living in full obedience to the Father.

Where the first Adam distrusted and disobeyed God’s Word, Jesus delights in it. Where the first Adam grasped for autonomy, Jesus submits in obedience. Athanasius explains the necessity of the incarnation simply: “He became man that we might become god” (*On the Incarnation*, 54.3)—that is, humanity might be restored to fellowship with God and share in his life. A return to the creation ideal. Only one who is truly man can stand in humanity’s place. Only the Son of God can succeed where the first Adam had failed.

The events of Palm Sunday declare that the rightful head of a new humanity has arrived. But reclaiming what was lost could not occur by authority alone. The fall created guilt. Guilt requires payment. The city Jesus enters is filled with sinners under judgment, and reclaiming what was lost necessitates atonement. Someone has to pay, satisfying God’s wrath. The King who comes to reclaim must also come to redeem and regenerate. To give his life in place of death and bring life from it.

#### **4. Good Friday: The Curse That Was Satisfied**

The cross stands at the centre of the Christian faith because it is the crux of God’s plan. Isaiah 53 revealed the plan some 600 years prior:

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:5-6)

The Servant bears sin that is not his own. The punishment that brings peace falls on him. This is substitution. This is satisfaction—not just suffering, but atonement. Paul draws this contrast sharply: “As one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men” (Romans 5:18). Jesus’ obedience, even to death, answers Adam’s disobedience. Martin Luther describes this as the “wonderful exchange” (*Lectures on Galatians*, 1535), as our sin is imputed to Christ, his righteousness is counted to us.

When Jesus declares, “It is finished” (John 19:30), he announces that the full payment has been made. The obedience required under God’s covenant is fulfilled by Christ. The penalty earned under the curse is covered. God’s justice has not been ignored, but it has been satisfied as he breathes his last and is laid in the tomb just as the Sabbath begins. A noteworthy detail.

Genesis 2 tells us that God finished his work of creation and rested. On Good Friday, Jesus finishes the work of redemption and rests. The parallel is not just some beautiful irony; the redemption Christ accomplishes is re-creation. His finished work leads to rest. Not defeat, but the silence of work complete. And humanity is the beneficiary. We also rest after the work that he alone accomplished. Work that we could not have done for ourselves.

An ancient Holy Saturday sermon describes the moment: “There is a great silence on earth today...because the King is asleep.” The silence is heavy because the work is done, but the body of Christ lies still. The debt is paid. The curse is borne. But death remains.

As the Sabbath dawns, creation waits.

### **5. *Easter Sunday: The Beginning of New Creation***

On the first day of the week, in a garden, Christ rises. John is careful with detail because the setting matters: the first creation began in a garden and the new creation begins in a garden. The resurrection is not simply a return to life as normal; it’s the beginning of a new order and an earnest of the fully renewed creation to come.

Paul calls Jesus “the firstfruits” (1 Corinthians 15:20). His resurrection is the new beginning, because what happens to him will happen to all who belong to him. “As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Humanity now stands under two heads. Under Adam: sin and death. Under Christ: righteousness and life.

Union with Christ is participation in this new humanity: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is not metaphorical language; it means that resurrection life has already begun for those who belong to him. In Jesus, death is not simply postponed, it is defeated. Now and forever.

Revelation 21 shows the end, which every celebration of Easter points us toward:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain

anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:1-5)

The events of the Triumphal Entry, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday are God’s pledge that he will renew his created world. What began in the garden of Eden and was lost through rebellion begins again in a garden at the empty tomb.

## **6. Conclusion**

The theology of creation, fall, and new creation is not an abstract framework imposed over the Passion narrative. It is the logic the Passion itself demands. The arrival of the King only matters if something real was lost. The cross only makes sense if there was a curse. The resurrection only makes sense if death truly reigned. What began in Genesis reached its decisive turning point in Jerusalem and will find its decisive conclusion when the New Jerusalem descends out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:2).

This is why we approach Holy Week as three connected services and one unfolding act of redemption:

On Palm Sunday, we see the rightful King step into the place of covenant failure. His entry into Jerusalem is not simply a spectacle, it’s a bold claim.

On Good Friday, we stand where justice and mercy meet—where the curse is borne and the work is finished, though the world fails to see what has been secured.

On Easter Sunday, we witness the beginning of what the prophets longed for. Not mere survival after death, but the inauguration of a new creation.

The movement from garden to garden, loss to satisfaction, and death to life, is the structure of the gospel itself. We should not rush the story but walk through it carefully, deliberately, and thoughtfully. What happened in that final week of Jesus’ earthly life was not simply meant to change the lives of individuals like you and me. It was meant to alter the very course of creation.

The King has come.

The work is finished.

The grave is empty.

The new creation has begun. He has made and is making and will make all things new. (Revelation 21:1-11)